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"The Language of Another World" Lord Byron's Therapeutic Journey

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Lord Byron's Therapeutic Journey

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In Loving Memory

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Exorcise: *Drive out or attempt to drive out (an evil spirit) from a person or place: an attempt to exorcise an unquiet spirit.*[1]

[1] "Definition of Exorcise in English:." Exorcise: Definition of Exorcise in Oxford Dictionary (American English) (US). January 1, 2014. Accessed October 25, 2014.

Introduction: Dark Therapy

"I linger yet with Nature, for the night / Hath been to me a more familiar face / Than that of man; and in her starry shade / Of dim and solitary loveliness, / I learn'd the language of another world."[2] "The Language of Another World," the title of this project is drawn from the pages of George Gordon, Lord Byron's *Manfred*. As the final moments of his life come to an end, Manfred, despite warnings of his impending doom, remains firmly fixed in his past. He has spent every waking moment in a desperate attempt to obliterate his past, and forget his previous transgressions. Yet, despite his persistence to shut out his past, Manfred refuses to submit, to bend his knee to those who offered him aid. Both the desire to forget, and the refusal to submit mark not only *Manfred*, but also the life of Lord Byron as well. Through these two ideas, Lord Byron worked to forge the literary character type that scholars have come to define as the Byronic Hero. The most adamant question remains, however, even after Manfred offers up his famous last words "Old Man! 'tis not so difficult to die."[3] This line is so powerful and so essential to the meaning of his metaphysical drama, that Byron chastised his publisher for removing it.[4] Why does Manfred refuse to submit? To answer this query, this project pursues the idea of therapy in dark literature.

When one thinks of "Dark Literature," the usual response resonates with images of bleak landscapes and decrepit castles. A world of demonic villains and terrifying

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[2] George Gordon and Alice Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2010) p. 280

[3] Ibid., p. 283

[4] Ibid., As a footnote on page 283 of *Byron's Poetry and Prose* notes, William Gifford, editor of *Manfred*, urged publisher John Murray to remove the selected from the first edition of the text. Byron, enraged by this, wrote Murray, saying "You have destroyed the whole effect & moral of the poem by omitting the last of Manfred's speaking."

science lurk within the pages of the Gothic Novel. This being considered, to say that this literature is therapeutic seems at first to contradict the sensations of terror that the work elicits within its audience. In actuality, however, the art of scaring an audience can in itself be a form of therapy.

Anna Letitia Aikin, known better as Anna Barbauld, one of the poets of the Romantic era, wrote about the power of terror in a short piece entitled "On the Pleasure Derived from Objects of Terror." Aikin writes that "the painful sensation immediately arising from a scene of misery, is so much softened and alleviated by the reflex sense of self-approbation attending virtuous sympathy," that one may find "a very exquisite and refined pleasure remaining, which makes us desirous of again being witnesses to such scenes, instead of flying from them with disgust and horror."[5] The emergence of the Gothic genre, and later that of horror fiction show that Aikin was correct in her assessment that a large percentage of people are drawn toward the idea of terror. In modern society, horror movies draw large numbers of crowds, even though they are generally easy to predict and are more than often extremely violent and gory. Despite these facts, people continue to flock to every *Saw* and *Insidious* film that they release. Aikin links this desire to the "greediness" in which people take in tales of ghosts, demons, and murder. In the media business, terror and chaos sell. People will buy up a newspaper if the caption relates to a mass-murder spree or a shipwreck. However, if one were to pass a newspaper with a headline detailing the kindness of a stranger, that person

[5] Anna Letitia Aikin, John Aikin and Stephen Greenblatt, ed., "On the Pleasure derived from Objects of Terror; with Sir Bertrand, a Fragment," *The Norton Anthology of English Literature Volume D: The Romantic Period*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2012), p. 590

would be more likely to pass up on that paper. This is because humans as a whole, on some deep psychological level, are morbidly curious.

Aikin writes that "a strange and unexpected event awakens the mind, and keeps it on the stretch." She is speaking of an act of ventilation, the sensation that one may get when sucking in a deep breath of air. Terror acts in this way as a form of clearing mental blockage. People have a tendency to get "stuck," when it comes to certain situations or thoughts, often while under stress. The ventilation effect of terror allows for the individual to suddenly release themselves of that mental stagnation and move forward. Thus, the power of terror is so enticing. Aikin writes that there are "forms unseen, and mightier far than we." These "forms unseen" referenced by Aikin relate to the concept of the sublime. Edmund Burke tied the sublime with terror when he wrote *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful*.

> "WHATEVER is fitted in any sort to excite the ideas of pain and danger, that is to say, whatever is in any sort terrible, or is conversant about terrible objects, or operates in a manner analogous to terror, is a source of the *sublime;* that is, it is productive of the strongest emotion which the mind is capable of feeling."[6]

The natural world is so vast, that man cannot help but to be humbled by it, this is the sublime. When one stands on the edge of a mountain and commits his gaze to the vastness of the land, he is overwhelmed by an intense wave of emotion as he realizes that he is dwarfed by the world around him. Terror acts much like that feeling, culminating in the ventilation effect.

Terror in literature holds closely with trauma. Geoffrey Hartman writes that there is a relationship between "words and trauma" and that this is useful because it helps us to

[6] Edmund Burke, and David Womersley. *A Philosophical Enquiry into the Origin of Our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful: And Other Pre-revolutionary Writings*. London: Penguin Books, 1998.

"'read the wound' with the aid of literature."[7] The connection, it seems, is found in the act of writing. When one writes, they are generating free-flowing thought, meaning that there is no mental blockage. Trauma causes such blockage to appear. When a traumatic event occurs, according to Hartman, two things happen. First, there is the traumatic event itself, which is "registered rather than experienced." According to Hartman, when this event occurs, it "seems to have bypassed perception and consciousness, and falls directly into the psyche." This means that the effect of the event leaves a mental wound, as well as the possibility of a physical one. The second piece of a traumatic event is a "kind of memory of the event," which Hartman says comes in the form of a "perpetual troping of it by the bypassed or severely split (dissociated) psyche."[8] In other words, when a seriously traumatic event occurs in one's life, or a series of such events, the mental scars that occur often do not register as such with the victim, thus they are constantly in a state of turmoil, attempting to get back what they have apparently "lost." The victim simply wishes to undo the event that has transpired.

In his essay, Geoffrey Hartman connects trauma with literature by examining Romantic poet William Blake's *Urizen*. He speaks of the "mysterious turbulence in the heavens that expels or segregates a god (Urizen)" also noting that "the fall is thus a divine sickness, a disorder in the heavens." Hartman writes that this "does not happen after the Creation, as in Christian interpretations of the Book of Genesis." He states that rather "Creation is itself the catastrophe, at once shock, splitting off and the reification of a mysterious diminishment." In the story, the prophetic Albion attempts to "recover--to

[7] Geoffrey H. Hartman, "On Traumatic Knowledge and Literary Studies," *New Literary History* Volume 23.6 (1995), p. 537-563
[8] Ibid.,

dream himself back to--a state of unity and self-integration." Thus Albion represents the victim of the traumatic event, who, not registering wound on his psyche, attempts to undo what has been done. However, "Albion's dream cannot easily escape history, or a constricted imagination." Therefore he is stuck in a "repetitious nightmare purging itself of internalized or institutionalized superstitions."[9] This state is much like the one that the reader finds Manfred in. The Faustian noble has been scarred by some unknown event in his past, and he is haunted by the obsession of "forgetting" about it.

When looking at Byron's *Manfred*, one may ask what is therapeutic about the Byronic Hero, about Manfred's refusal to bend his knee? The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the word therapy as "the medical treatment of disease; curative medical or psychiatric treatment."[10] This project strives to focus on answering this question. The answer comes in a form of self-reflection projected upon the literary audience. The idea of self-reflection works through the audience's recognition and reception of Manfred's self-destructive nature and their realization that they are in a similar state as the character himself. This dark therapy works to exorcise "the unquiet spirit" of the past, in an attempt to free the afflicted person, so that they may lead a life of fulfillment. This is the Burkian model of the sublime, and represents the ventilation effect of clearing blockage.

Inducing an audience into self-reflection can better be explained by looking at the works of Bertolt Brecht, a prominent playwright in the twentieth century. Brecht is the father of Brechtian Theatre, based around the idea of Epic Theatre. Epic Theatre related to the idea of epic as meaning "not tied to time." Brecht's Epic Theatre stemmed from the work of fellow German theater director, Erwin Piscator, who stated that the idea of Epic

[9] Ibid.,
[10] "therapy, n. 1". *OED Online*. (Oxford University Press, 2014).

Theatre was the "form that emphasizes the socio-political content of drama, rather than its emotional manipulation of the audience or on the production's formal beauty."[11] This is an example of the anti-sentimental.

Bertolt Brecht took Piscator's approach and transformed it into the idea of dialectic theatre. This idea was coined as "non-Aristotelian" or a rejection of catharsis in favor of an "alienation effect."[12] Brecht's idea was that by making it clear to his audience that they were watching a play, that they would form an alienation to the characters, not conforming or sympathizing with them. This approach would allow the audience to then ask themselves what exactly the play was attempting to tell them.

Brecht's Epic Theatre included various points, such as the belief that it "turns the spectator into an observer, but arouses his capacity for action" and that instead of every scene flowing into the next to form a unified play, Each scene would be for itself, meaning that the audience could analyze them individually, helping them form their own observations and opinions. Brecht stated that "the essential point of the epic theatre is perhaps that it appeals less to the feelings than to the spectator's reason." It is important, however, to note that Brecht's model of self-reflection does not concern itself with sentimentality. Byron produces the element of fear through sentimental means. His work is steeped in moments of sadness and nostalgia as well, elements of the sentimental.

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Today, the world of entertainment is filled with characters showing signs of "Byronic" attributes. Men and woman "stuck in the past," refuse to vanquish their

[11] Erwin Piscator, *Grolier Encyclopedia of Knowledge,* Volume 15 (Grolier Inc. 1991).
[12] "Bertolt Brecht: an overview Epic Theatre." *Academic Computing at Evergreen*. (The Evergreen State College, 2008), Web.

demons and accept that the workings of the world are not within their control. Examples span from characters such as Ryan Hardy, the lead role on FOX's *The Following*, who is unable to put aside the notion that he is responsible for the death that piles up around him. Therefore, Hardy isolates himself from his contemporaries and spends his time pursuing cold-blooded killers, the only people who truly understand him. No one can forget the age old character of Batman, who lives to avenge the brutal murders of his parents by dawning cape and cowl and hunting criminals through the dark streets of Gotham. Both of these men fit the profile of the Byronic Hero.

Peter L. Thorslev Jr., while attempting to define the Byronic Hero, states that the character-type is "invariably courteous toward women, often loves music or poetry, has a strong sense of honor, and carries about with him like the brand of Cain a deep sense of guilt.[13]" He makes a point to state that many scholars have often attempted to distinguish what makes a character a Byronic Hero. The Byronic Hero, is he a heroic villain, or a villainous hero? What is his true purpose? As well as examining the therapeutic aspects of the Byronic Hero, this thesis project aims to unravel the mystery behind the development of the Byronic Hero. How did the Byronic Hero come to represent a rebellious hero?

The Byronic Hero was named after Lord Byron, one of the great poets of the "Second Generation" of Romanticism. Byron, who was arguably the most famous of his contemporaries at the time of their writings, rose to fame almost overnight with the publication of the first cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. He would see his fame grow with the publications of later work, though the controversy of Byron's alleged affair

[13] Peter L. Thorslev, Jr. *The Byronic Hero: Types and Prototypes*. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1962). p. 8

with his half-sister Augusta Leigh would force the poet into self-exile, where he would stay for the remainder of his short life. Byron continued writing while in exile, eventually penning great sections of his unfinished epic, *Don Juan*, and his drama *Manfred*, which began in the midst of the "haunted summer" of 1816, the year that would see the birth of Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein*. Byron would go on to become a symbol of hope for the people of Greece during the Greek War of Independence, before dying in Greece at the age of thirty-six.

The first chapter of this thesis begins with a look at the similarities between Byron and his hero-type, exploring the possibility that the hero was modeled directly after Lord Byron himself. Through an analysis of Byron's relationship with melancholy, the chapter examines the early writings of Lord Byron and establishes firm evidence for the link between poet and literary hero.

The second chapter explores the transition from melancholy to the birth of the Byronic Hero in *Childe Harold*'s *Pilgrimage*, noting the vast difference in writing as compared with *Hours of Idleness*, his earlier work. This chapter starts out by combining the ever-prevalent notion of darkness, played with by many Romantic poets, as a way of describing Byron's predicament. Following both Wordsworth and Anne Finch's figuration of night in poetry, Byron's approach to sublime darkness works as a starting off position for the transition to come. This is formed through theory of an existing balance in nature. Using pieces from several sources, the chapter continues by proposing that through movement, Byron is unshackled from his calcified state of melancholy and ventures towards a new type of writing. Through his development of the Byronic Hero,

Byron is able to create avatars through which he begins a therapeutic healing process, moving from a frozen state of past reflection to a new, refreshing point of view.

In establishing base arguments, the third chapter follows with an examination of *Childe Harold*. The result of this is an almost overnight climb from obscurity to success and fame. The "first" Byronic Hero, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* marks a major change in Lord Byron's writing style. Free from what William Blake called "mind-forged manacles,"[14] This chapter examines the way in which *Childe Harold* works as a transitional frame text, a series of pictures that are pieced together to represent movement. Byron modifies the Byronic Hero throughout, transitioning from scenes of landscapes and multiple narrators, towards more intimate moments. All the while, Byron was heading toward his mythical "Haunted Summer" and the creation of his great therapeutic instrument, *Manfred.*

Chapter four looks at how Canto IV of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* links closely with his great melodrama, *Manfred*. Using the story of heart-broken Manfred, it is the intention of this project to cast light on the final transformation of Lord Byron. Using supporting work from Timothy Morton and others, this chapter will examine the psychology of *Manfred*. Is Manfred's journey and interaction with the spiritual world actually real, or is it simply an illusion played out in his mind? Will Byron's journey end in chaos, a world of bleak destruction, or will he be able to move forward with his life, leaving his past behind him?

The conclusion of this project presents the Lord Byron that was writer of *Don Juan* and the hero of the Greek Revolution. The final explanation of his transformation

[14] William Blake and Stanley Appelbaum ed., *English Romantic Poetry: An Anthology*, (New York: Dover Publications inc. 1996). p. 8

from sad youth to patriotic hero of Greece gives his readers, as well as himself, a new chance at life. The question is then presented of what happens after such a great transformation and transition through life.

It is the hope of the author that this analysis of Lord Byron's hero-type sheds new light on the identity of the Byronic Hero, and that it presents its reader with a fresh take on the importance of literature. Through a form of exorcism, the act of driving out, the Gothic elements of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage, Manfred*, and *Don Juan* all play a pivotal role in relation to the Byronic Hero, in their ability to act as therapeutic instruments. The connection between dark literature and therapy is a connection not often looked upon, though it is the opinion of the author that this connection is of great importance, not only in allowing one to fully understand themselves, but also in its ability to shed further appreciation upon this side of the literary canon.

(*"Lord Byron, britischer Poet"*) Thomas Phillips[15]

[15] Thomas Phillips, *Lord Byron, britischer Poet*, 1824. Painting.

Chapter One: Beginnings

"I want a hero; an uncommon want."[16] When George Gordon, more commonly known as Lord Byron, penned the opening line of what he called, his "Epic Satire," *Don Juan*, he had in mind, a form of "Hero" unlike its classical counterparts. The hero of classical literature was like Heracles; a divine hero, a half-man, half-god who displays courage in the face of danger and has a moral sense of self-sacrifice. Byron's hero type, aptly named "The Byronic Hero," was a character who was "prematurely sated by sin, who wanders about in an attempt to escape society and his own memories."[17]

The origin of the Byronic Hero has been a debated subject for decades, with many literary scholars attributing the unique, if not often disturbing, qualities of the hero type to the poet himself. Byron's *Hours of Idleness*, published originally in 1806 as *Fugitive Pieces,* gives its reader a sense of many of the attributes of the Byronic Hero. This suggests that, unlike the popular belief that Byron's hero-type came to fruition within the stanzas of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Lord Byron had already developed a prototype by his eighteenth year.

In the opening lines of "On a Distant View of Harrow" Byron presents his audience with the first glimpses of a narrator so enveloped by his past, that he cannot fully comprehend the present. "Ye scenes of my childhood, whose love recollection, / Embitters the present, compar'd with the past."[18] He returns to his childhood school, but finds no comfort there, as his memories haunt him. "Again I behold, where for hours I have ponder'd / As reclining, at eve, on yon tombstone I lay."[19] Byron's dark reference to

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[16] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p. 385
[17] "The Satanic and Byronic Hero: An Overview," wwnorton.com. Accessed December 31, 2014.
[18] George Gordon Lord Byron, *Hours of Idleness*, (London: S and J Ridge, 1807). p. 4
[19] Ibid., p. 5

reflection of the past while laying at the feet of the dead reveals one of the greatest suggestions of the Byronic Hero. The deadening of the world, as portrayed by the tombstone, signifies how a longing for the past, through recollection, has numbed the narrator to even the grimmest elements of the present. It is not that the narrator isn't torn at the knowledge of lying beside a grave; he merely fails to recognize the significance of what the tombstone represents. The narrator does not seem to have the reverence that one normally has toward the grave of another.

It would seem that in the early stages, the Byronic Hero finds itself most associated with a state of melancholy. The *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*) defines melancholy as "A mood, state, or episode of sadness, dejection, or introspection."[20] At its very core, the Byronic Hero is a character defined by mood. It is this mood that seeps from the character and, in a way, infects the land and the people around him. The early representation of the character takes on this melancholic stance, in which the narrator is prone to fits of mourning and sadness. In "On a Distance View of Harrow," the narrator lays at the feet of a tombstone because he feels only an intense state of depression. He has become introverted, closed off from the world around him, unable to put aside his grief.

The history of melancholy relates back to the four humors of the medieval world, those being choleric, melancholic, sanguine, and phlegmatic. One who is melancholic prefers to be secluded, cutting themselves off from society, and they tend to relate more toward the earth, being the element that is closely associated with melancholy. This could, perhaps, be a reason for the narrator's desire to lay near a tombstone, as it symbolizes the return to earth.

[20] "Melancholy, n. 3C". *OED Online*. (Oxford University Press, 2014).

The childhood of George Gordon may yet shed some light on the origins of his dark hero. Byron was born to Catherine Gordon, heiress of Gight, an ancient castle in Aberdeenshire, Scotland. His father, the infamous Captain John "Mad Jack" Byron, was a quick-tempered sailor who had a way with women, and spent great deals of money. Originally married to Amelia Osborne, Marchioness of Carmarthen, the daughter of Robert Darcy, the fourth Earl of Holderness, Jack saw in her a means of achieving large sums of money, as she was the heiress of a lifetime income of four thousand pounds a year. Amelia, who bore three children to Jack Byron, most notably Augusta Leigh, is said to have died in childbirth, but it was rumored that she had perished from "ill usage at the hands of her husband."[21] Less than a year later, Jack Byron married Catherine Gordon, again, it would seem, for her money. Byron spent more money than the two had, reducing himself to the level of begging from loan sharks. He took on Catherine's last name in an attempt to get legal access of her estate, but as her fortunes rapidly dwindled, "Mad Jack" left his wife and their newborn son, the young Lord Byron, and retreated to France, to the company of his sister, Frances "Fanny" Leigh. Jack Byron's strange relationship with his sister would go on to haunt the Byron household for several years, as it was suggested that the two engaged in incestuous activities. Jack Byron eventually died in 1791, when the young lord was only three years old, reportedly from consumption.

The young lord spent his childhood in a multitude of different places, as his mother was often too poor to stay in one location for very long. The typical haunt of Byron as a child was a simple one room apartment, or similar location, throughout the city of Edinburgh. Byron shared a complicated relationship with his mother. Though

[21] Benita Eisler, *Byron: Child of Passion, Fool of Fame*, (New York: Vintage Books, 1999). p. 9

Catherine had only a little bit of money at any given time, she doted on her son, well aware that through his ancestry, he was related to James I. Nonetheless, she could be incredibly cruel at times, her words venomous daggers. Still, she raised the boy to act and think like a man of means, like a lord. It is possible that because of the harsh treatment of the boy, and the overwhelming sense of poverty in his youth, that Byron, in an attempt to escape his past, fashioned a literary model of himself in his writings. This would not only have provided an escape from his past, but also a way for the young poet to truly be in control of a world, especially when he felt that his own world could come crashing down at any time.

("*Portrait of Catherine Gordon*" Thomas Stewardson)[22]

(*"Captain Byron"*)[23]

The Byronic Hero, often being characterized by traits such as arrogance, cynicism, and self-destructiveness reflects Byron himself throughout his life. As a child,

[22] Thomas Stewardson, *Portrait of Catherine Gordon*, 1800s. Oil on Canvas. Perhaps many of Byron's problems with his writing were caused by stress induced upon him by his mother, with whom he was known to engage in bitter fights with.

[23] *Captain Byron*. Engraving. Byron, detested by his father's actions, would tell friends and acquaintances that "Mad Jack" Byron cut his own throat.

the poet lord was prone to fits of rage, primarily concerning his deformity. Byron was born with a clubfoot, and although his mother and several doctors attempted to correct this, they ultimately only succeeded in causing Byron extreme amounts of pain. Lord Byron, who was already incredibly shy, especially around women, would grow tyrannical at the slightest mention of his foot. Byron's quick temper extended beyond his deformity. When he was a small child, he had a dog with him by the name of Wooly. Once, when Wooly had apparently offended his master, Byron seized a loaded pistol and went out into the gardens, where the dog rested. The youth pushed the dog over and exclaimed "Wooly, you have done so & so. You shall *die* Wooly."[24] Byron's hot temperament led him to openly attack servants as well. A cook at Earls Court had been teased by the young lord, leading her to openly confront him, saying, "You a Lord indeed! I wonder who the devil ever made you a Lord!" Byron responded by seizing a gun from the wall and firing several rounds into her hat.[25]

The idea that the Byronic Hero is a template formed from the life and characteristic moods of the poet himself is supported throughout *Hours of Idleness*, where the narrator of "Elegy on Newstead Abbey" contemplates his fate as "last and youngest of a noble line" and describes the "mouldering turrets" and "damp and mossy tombs" of his former estate as a kind of self-reflection on the decay of his own family.[26] Whereas the Byron's were once a great and influential household, they have fallen, through poverty and ill-will, into shambles. Byron's own ancestral home, the great Newstead Abbey, had gone to ruin under the advising of "The Wicked Lord," the 5th

[24] Eisler, *Byron*, p. 36
[25] Ibid., p. 45
[26] Byron, *Hours of Idleness*, p. 4

Baron Byron. Byron also uses this self-reflection as a form of self-pity, a trademark of the Byronic Hero.

It has been the purpose of this chapter, as brief as it is, to show evidence of the connection between Byron and his dark hero. Due to the state of affairs that made up the first eighteen years of his life, Byron was highly susceptible to melancholic behavior. The poet entered a calcified state, frozen in the past, as any hope of a bright future appeared to be lost. Between the merciless tormenting of his club foot by fellow students and friends, and the violent temperament of his mother, Byron was an easy target for depression. The walls that he built up around his psyche mirrored the effects brought on by a severe case of trauma, placing the young lord in perpetual state of lamenting anguish. With no pleasure to be derived from the present and only terrible memories in his past, Byron was at an impasse. England had lost all sense of home, and had in fact become little more than a prison. Byron had succumbed to melancholy.

Chapter Two: The Road to *Childe Harold*

So far, it has been the aim of this thesis to focus on the idea that Lord Byron is the first of his dark heroes. However, as the case has been made, the early signs of the Byronic Hero are infused with a heavy use of melancholy. Yet, if one was to look at the later examples of the hero-type in Byron's *Don Juan*, they would surely find a different form of that hero. *Don Juan* is steeped in humor, a far cry from melancholy. Where does this transformation occur, and what is its significance?

Found throughout much of Byron's work, especially his later material is a fascination with the concept of darkness. This darkness appears to be more than just the absence of light, but rather a subliminal state, a separate psyche as it were of Byron himself. It is the intention of this thesis to prove that through a therapeutic transformation, Byron left a state of melancholy stillness and propelled himself and his writing into a free-flowing satiric style self-evident in *Don Juan*. The connection with darkness relates to this transformation. Darkness is in itself an entirely different and complex world. Byron himself put it perfectly in describing this world. "Darkness had no need / Of aid from them—She was the Universe."[27]

Darkness was written at the height of the "haunted summer" of 1816, as the Tambora volcano was erupting. Byron wrote constantly about the state of the weather, noting in a letter to Samuel Rogers "We have had lately such stupid mists - fogs - rains - and perpetual density - that one may think that Castlereagh had the foreign affairs of the kingdom of heaven also - upon his hands."[28] What emerged was a poem about the total

[27] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*, p. 245
[28] Leslie A. Marchand, ed. *Byron's Letters and Journals: The Complete and Unexpurgated Text of All Letters Available in Manuscript and the Full Printed Version of All Others*, (Newark: University of Delaware Press 1994).

destruction of the planet, and the end of the human race.[29] Envisioning a balance in the world of the sublime, Byron seems to have also been looking at a balance in the psyche itself. The primary motive for this, it seems, was that Byron was attempting to create the ventilation effect seen through Aikin's earlier work. Byron wanted to breach the blockage that had occurred in the form of melancholy behavior during his earlier years. Due to this blockage, Byron's psyche had become unbalanced.

Part of the Byronic Hero's therapeutic process, is its ability to restore order to the balance that exists in the mental state of the person it is affecting. For Byron, years spent at the hand of his cruel mother and the traumatic events of his early life had caused that balance to be disturbed, resulting in a rooted state of melancholic longing. Byron was physically and mentally unable to move forward in both writing and in his relationships because of this. He had, in a sense, become a victim of a traumatic event as proposed by Geoffrey Hartman. His turn toward darkness therefore represented the best possible way of examining such a concept. Byron was not alone in his analysis of the power of the dark.

William Wordsworth, who so perfectly captured the defining essence of the sublime, wrote about darkness in a poem titled "Sonnet on Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress." Wordsworth writes in the final lines of the poem, "as the soft star of dewy evening tells / What radiant fires were drown'd by days malignant pow'r / That only wait the darkness of the night / To cheer the wand'ring wretch with hospitable light."[30] This poem projects the great power associated with

[29] Jonathan Bate, "Living with the Weather", *Romanticism: Critical Concepts in Literary and Cultural Studies*, (New York: Routledge 2006), p. 395

[30] William Wordsworth, "Sonnet on Seeing Miss Helen Maria Williams Weep at a Tale of Distress", *The European Magazine* v. xl, (March 1787) p. 202

darkness. These “radiant fires” represent the stars in the sky, and they are “drown’d” by the light of the sun, which gives great light to the world below. However, the poem seems to suggest that the sun’s light may illuminate our common sense, but it also suggests a potentially more powerful and sublime, source of enlightenment. Only in darkness can the true light be revealed, the true source of healing.

Anne Finch, who wrote one hundred years before Byron, put to paper a poem about the seductive sublime of night in her “A Nocturnal Reverie.” Finch gives her readers a glimpse of a world filled with tender images of sleep-inducing comfort, of a night that borders on the seductive in its ability to captivate its reader. Darkness is a tool used to craft a plethora of emotion throughout different genres and topics. It can be used to insinuate a state of terrible fear; the idea that a killer or ravenous animal can be lurking just out of view in the black is a deeply foreboding thought.

The night can also be a backdrop on a lacy love affair. Many movies use a calm starry night as a starting point for a steamy love scene or scandalous office romance. In the darkness, the colors of the erotic come to life; neon, pink and purple for strip clubs, red and blue for sketchy back-alley bars. This is the world of Noir, but it is also a jumping point for stories of safety. The dynamic balance in nature pertaining to the night is, in one sense, the essence of the sublime. If one can accept that there exists in nature a balanced tension, and that this balance is exemplified by night, then the next step is to look at both sides of the spectrum, and to examine what the positive and negative aspects of that balance are.

To this end, one must turn to the opening lines of Anne Finch’s “A Nocturnal Reverie.” “In such a night, when every louder wind / Is to its distant cavern safe

confined." This image of the night presents the reader immediately with a feeling of calm, a soothing effect that will continue throughout the work. All is quiet in the world of the night, the black of dark has enveloped the world, and the wind, which could bring cold and discomfort, is suddenly removed from the equation. This is a scene of perfect peace, a mind at its best in the psychological sense.[31]

In "Darkness," though also invoking the muse of the night, Byron's interpretation of night's sublime power pertains to the unparalleled destruction that can occur when this balance in nature is upset. "I had a dream, which was not all a dream." This opening line presents the reader with a chilling, almost prophetic vision. One can see, from this line, a warning that the world that Byron will describe will have actual implications. "The bright sun was extinguish'd, and the stars / Did wander darkling in the eternal space, / Rayless, and pathless, and the icy earth / Swung blind and blackening in the moonless air." Finch presents the reader with an image of the coming of night as as soothing sensation, putting them into a tranquil state of peace. Byron immediately tears them from this notion, wanting his reader to feel the coming dread.

Finch notes that the wind is not present in her text, yet within Byron's world, the planet grows icy and cold, the balance of nature being offset. Without the sun, there is no path, there is no hope. "Morn came and went—and came, and brought no day, /And men forgot their passions in the dread /Of this their desolation; and all hearts / Were chill'd into a selfish prayer for light." In the darkness of this new world, humanity is unable to comprehend itself, people forget the trivial things that they hold for granted, and they are

[31] Anne Finch and Stephen Greenblatt, ed., "A Nocturnal Reverie", *The Norton Anthology of English Literature Volume C: The Restoration and the Eighteenth Century*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2012), p. 2433

compelled to survive. Byron mentions this as a "selfish" action because he believes that nature is taking her due course because of man's actions. Man has not heeded the warnings, and the world that Finch portrays is now gone, lost in a coming apocalypse of incomprehensible power, the sublime. These poems offer stark contrasts in the scenery of the night.

Where Byron's world is bleak, Finch gives her reader an image of peace, "in such a night, when passing clouds give place, / Or thinly veil the heav'ns' mysterious face; /When in some river, overhung with green, / The waving moon and the trembling leaves are seen." This once again calls upon the power of the dream-like state. Night shrouds a beautiful world, a world that is merely waiting for humanity to come and enjoy it. "While sunburnt hills their swarthy looks conceal." The subliminal power of night is soothing in that it pushes out the sun, concealing the damage done by its harmful rays, showing that the darkness is soothing, that it can heal. This line ties in with Wordsworth image of darkness. The sun is actually hindering the power of the sublime, which is amplified through darkness.

Byron, however, makes sure to point out that darkness can also hurt. Byron speaks of men, and how "They did live by watchfires—and the thrones, / The palaces of crowned kings—the huts, / The habitations of all things which dwell, / Were burnt for beacons; cities were consum'd." There is no warmth in the dark of Byron's world; the terrible power of the sublime has turned on man, taking that rejuvenating power seen in "A Nocturnal Reverie," and turning it into a weapon of terrible destruction. When humanity tips the balance of nature, they pay the ultimate price. "And men were gather'd round their blazing homes / To look once more into each other's face… Forests were set

on fire—but hour by hour / They fell and faded—and the crackling trunks / Extinguish'd with a crash—and all was black."

Finch and Byron both express the balance that exists in nature, a balance that also exists in the mind of man. Each poet attempts to show both sides of the power of the sublime in this darkness. Finch carries this argument forward. "Whilst tyrant man does sleep; / When a sedate content the spirit feels / And no fierce light disturbs, whilst it reveals;" In Finch's world of night, the destructive nature of humanity is the "tyrant man" and because he is asleep, the world is still at peace.

Finch captures the essence of the sublime as she continues. "But silent musings urge the mind to seek / Something, too high for syllables to speak." Byron also contemplates the power of the sublime. "The wild birds shriek'd / And, terrified, did flutter on the ground, / And flap their useless wings; the wildest brutes / Came tame and tremulous; and vipers crawl'd / And twin'd themselves among the multitude, / Hissing, but stingless—they were slain for food." The fury of the sublime is so terrible that none, not even the helpless animals can avoid destruction.

The endings of both poems both reflect each other and showcase just how powerful darkness really is. "Finding the elements of rage disarmed, / O'er all below a solemn quiet grown, / Joys in th' inferior world, and thinks it like her own: / In such a night let me abroad remain." The trouble of man is over, the rage of the sublime has calmed. The balance in nature has been restored. This new world is the one in which Finch wishes to remain, this dream of tranquil calm. Even in Byron's world, the reader can see a kind of calm, though they know that it is only because all of humanity has perished. Humanity here represents the blockage that must be cleared or peace to return.

“The rivers, lakes and ocean all stood still, / And nothing stirr'd within their silent depths; / Ships sailorless lay rotting on the sea… / They slept on the abyss without a surge— /The waves were dead; the tides were in their grave,” Death brings about a kind of peace, a new dreamlike state. The difference of course is seen in the final moments of Finch and Byron.

For Finch, the dream is over, the day must begin again, and the turmoil of the human race starts over. “Till morning breaks, and all’s confused again; / Our cares, our toils, our clamors are renewed, / Or pleasures, seldom reached, again pursued.” In Byron’s “Darkness,” the dream also ends, though the reader is not given a new picture of what the day has in store for them, because like the poet said, it was a “dream that was not all a dream.” “The moon, their mistress, had expir'd before; / The winds were wither'd in the stagnant air, /And the clouds perish'd.” So what is left at the end of “Darkness,” and why did humanity have to die to understand the delicate balance of nature? These questions are answered by Byron himself in the final line of the poem. “Darkness had no need / Of aid from them—She was the Universe.”

Byron, by the summer of 1816, understood the connection between darkness and the sublime. Darkness brought forth power that was hidden in the light of day; the imagination flowed freely in the recesses of the night, when the growing fear compelled people to go forth into the shadows. Darkness aids in a connection between people and the sublime by providing the sense of terror that Aikin noted as a thing that people increasingly desired. This allowed for the emergence of the ventilation effect. He also seemed to understand that these two factors were linked when it came to the mind, to the

off-balance, trauma-induced state that he was still trapped in. Death is a central focus point for Lord Byron, something that linked "Darkness" with his youthful poetry.

In the earliest of Byron's poetry, which was published within Fugitive Pieces and Hours of Idleness, the poetry is laced with melancholic views of death and decay. In "On Leaving Newstead," Byron uses the description of his beloved ancestral home as a tool to describe the decay of his family tree.

> "Thro' thy battlements, Newstead, the hollow winds whistle;
> Thou, the halls of my fathers, art gone to decay;
> In thy once smiling garden, the hemlock and thistle
> Have choak'd up the rose, which late bloom'd in
> the way."[32]

However, much later in his life, in 1819, with the publication of *Don Juan*, one can see a far different atmosphere within the writing. With lines such as "Pleasure's a sin, and sometimes sin's a pleasure,"[33] Byron's dark hero has taken on a new tone. He no longer seems to linger on in graveyards, or within the walls of ancient monasteries. It would seem that the traits that place Byron within the genre of the Gothic are removed in his later works. The self-destructive actions of a Manfred-like character are replaced by the bumbling actions of a protagonist who is helplessly at the mercy of his fellow creatures. Don Juan, unlike his original counterpart of Spanish legend, is the victim, rather than the villain, to a host of women, who play upon his features and his unfailing ability to fall in love. Both of these examples, however, fail to fall into the category of the rebellious hero, the character-type that defines the typical view of the Byronic Hero.

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[32] Byron, *Hours of Idleness*, p. 4

[33] George Gordon and Stephen Greenblatt, *Norton Anthology of English Literature Volume D: The Romantic Period*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company 2012), p. 689

This dark hero appears to be a representation of Lord Byron himself, a reflected form, an idealized mask of the original face. This project argues that this figure of the Byronic Hero so adored by modern society, comes forward from a transition from the melancholic to the humorous within Byron's work, this project must first further explore melancholy and find the link to the transition point.

Byron underwent several changes within his lifetime. He, much like his writing, began as melancholic child, raised without the guidance of a father, and made to suffer at the hands of an unstable mother. Melancholy is therefore the base for the transition that will occur. The relationship between Byron and darkness later in life stems from a wanting to escape from a state of melancholy. Melancholy is laced within the text of "On a Distance View of Harrow," where the narrator is disturbing a place of rest for the departed. The narrator has no feeling for this, and is only concerned on the pain that comes from his inability to let go of his past. He wishes for happiness from the memories of old friends, but "ye dreams of my boyhood, how much I regret you, / Unfaded your memory dwells in my breast; / though sad and deserted, I ne'er can forget you, / your pleasures may still be, in fancy, possest."[34] The narrator, cloaked in melancholy, feels abandoned by those friends, and the pain of that desertion is all he knows.

Byron's obsession with the pain of memory is referenced throughout much of his early work. In "Fragment Written Shortly after the Marriage of Miss Chaworth," a poem concerning Mary Chaworth, Byron's earliest love and cousin, Byron references the pleasure of seeing the hills of Misk, a spot near his home in Newstead. The pleasure that

[34] Gordon, Lord Byron, *Hours of Idleness*, p. 6

should have been repulsion in such a bleak space becomes a haven through the pain from his love being united with another man.

> "Hills of Annesley, Bleak and Barren,
> Where my thoughtless Childhood stray'd,
> How the northern Tempests, warring,
> Howl above thy tufted Shade!
> Now no more, the Hours beguiling,
> Former favourite Haunts I see;
> Now no more my Mary smiling,
> Makes ye seem a Heaven to Me."[35]

Melancholy is sometimes known as "sadness without cause."[36] However, as this project strives to argue, Byron had much cause for his melancholy. Under the relentless torment of his mother, and his ever-increasing debt that Byron began to accrue as he worked on his Master's at Trinity College, the poet slipped into an ever-deepening depression. He thus became melancholic. The poet fits well then in the category of "Black Melancholy," that which constitutes a state of "morbid depression."[37] The young lord was trapped in a place, England, which gave him no hope for a bright future.

Melancholy transitioned from a mere notation as one of the four humors, or states that could alter the mood of an individual, to that of adding "colour to mental tendencies and conditions."[38] One of the key factors of the transformation of melancholy was that through this process, melancholy was seen as being ignorant of the sentimental. This separation from the sentimental aided in Byron's state of isolation because sentimentality was such a large part of his work.

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[35] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*, p. 4
[36] Raymond Klibansky, Erwin Panofsky, and Fritz Saxl. *Saturn and Melancholy: Studies in the History of Natural Philosophy, Religion and Art*. (London: Nelson, 1964.) p. 217
[37] Ibid., 236
[38] Ibid.,

What makes Byron's relationship to melancholy so interesting is that he was one of the first to deal with what scholars now see as a new form of melancholy. This "new" melancholy appears for the first time in the beginning of the nineteenth century, around the time of Byron's writing. The "romantic" melancholy of the nineteenth century differs from earlier examples in literature as it is "boundless." Early examples of melancholy related more closely with a feeling of stone, that of a feeling of being stationary. This early melancholy had a binding effect. Melancholy moved toward a state that was "indefinable," and because of this, melancholic examples in literature moved toward a form that was both "harsh and alert."[39] Melancholy transitioned from a form of "self-contemplation" as seen in Byron's writing, to that of attempting to "realize" itself in later poetry. Byron's relationship with melancholy, it would then seem, was on the cusp of this transition.[40]

Suppose that the "melancholic primarily suffers from the contradiction between time and infinity, while at the same time giving a positive value to his own sorrow."[41] If this be the case, this then describes Byron. Byron's early poetry, and some later works until *Manfred* constantly reflect on time and memory. Byron's sense of time is distorted, much like T.S. Eliot's Prufrock in repeating to himself "and indeed there will be time"[42] as a means of justifying his ever-increasing obsession with trivial things. Prufrock notes that time is slipping away, that he has "measured out my life with coffee spoons,"[43] and because of this, the chances for doing anything great in his life are slipping slowly away.

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[39] Ibid., p. 238
[40] Ibid.,
[41] Ibid., p. 234-235
[42] T.S. Eliot and Stephen Greenblatt ed. *The Norton Anthology of English Literature Volume F: The Twentieth Century and After*, (New York: W.W. Norton and Company, 2012) p. 2525
[43] Ibid., p. 2525

Due to this "positive value" placed on Byron's own depression, he like Prufrock, although realizing that his state was unhealthy, was seemingly unable to break free from his cycle.

In "The Dream," written in 1816, Byron acknowledges melancholy directly. He describes the emergence of melancholy and notes its arrival as being preceded by a change in his dream. "A change came o'er the spirit of my dream. / The Lady of his love; -Oh! she was changed, / As by the sickness of the soul; her mind." Melancholy had taken root in the mind, just as it had in Byron's own psyche. "Had wandered from its dwelling, and her eyes, / They had not their own lustre, but the look / Which is not of the earth; she was become / The queen of a fantastic realm." The woman had slipped out of the rational world, entering a place very similar to Byron's own haunt. The character is semi-autobiographical in this regard. "Her thoughts / Were combinations of disjointed things; / And forms impalpable and unperceived / Of others' sight familiar were to hers." Melancholy has changed her personality, altering how she, and Byron see the everyday world. "And this the world calls frenzy; but the wise / Have a far deeper madness, and the glance / Of melancholy is a fearful gift; / What is it but the telescope of truth?" Byron hints here that though melancholy corrupts the happiness of the soul, it also gives its host a new lens to see through. Things that may have took on one meaning, now bear a different tone. "Which strips the distance of its fantasies, / And brings life near in utter nakedness, / Making the cold reality too real!"[44] The world seen through this melancholic lens is often too much for the mind to handle, thus it induces a state of madness, similar

[44] George Gordon Lord Byron and Ernest Hartley Coleridge ed., "The Dream", *Byron's Works: Poetry Volume 4*, (Wildside Press, 2010), p. 33

to Byron's condition in his early life. The balance spoken of before through darkness is distorted; the mind thus begins to break down.

Madness surely would have taken Byron, had it not been for a moment that occurred in 1809. Lord Byron, then twenty-one years of age, made a conscious decision to leave England. This was due primarily to a lack of funds required to pay back his London creditors, and his wishing to embark upon a "Grand Tour," the customary journey of young lords. On July 2, 1809, Byron left England. Biographer Benita Eisler notes that when it dawned on the young lord that he was leaving everything behind, "his spirits lifted before the anchor was weighed, and he burst in doggerel for a rollicking farewell for Hodgson and England."[45] The tone of this first piece of writing after leaving England's shores shows an almost instantaneous change from the melancholic past-reflections, and foreshadows the change in Byron's writing that was to come.

> "Huzza! Hodgson, we are going,
> Our embargo's off at last;
> Favourable breezes blowing
> Bend the canvass o'er the mast.
> ...
> Hobhouse muttering fearful curses,
> As the hatchway down he rolls,
> Now his breakfast, now his verses,
> Vomits forth—and damns our souls.
> "Here's a stanza
> On Braganza—
> Help!"—"A couplet?"—"No, a cup
> Of warm water—"
> "What's the matter?"
> "Zounds! my liver's coming up;
> I shall not survive the racket
> Of this brutal Lisbon Packet."[46]

[45] Eisler, *Byron*. p. 179
[46] Ibid., p. 180

(*"Dürer Melancholia I"* by Albrecht Dürer[47])

[47] Albrecht Dürer, *Dürer Melancholia I*. 1514. Copper plate. Note the stationary nature of the figure. Byron's own state of melancholy seems to have been induced by his own lack of movement from England, as it quickly changes in 1809 when he begins writing *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* while on his Grand Tour.

Chapter Three: Pilgrimage

Byron's melancholic writing style began to change around the time of his Grand Tour in 1809. Like many other noble-born Englishmen of his time, Byron wished to take several years of his youth and dedicate them to traveling the vast reaches of Europe. However, due to the seemingly-unending state of the Napoleonic War, Byron was forced to undertake a new kind of tour. The stops of France, Germany, Italy, and Vienna were scrubbed, Byron instead began his journey by borrowing a large sum of money from a loan-shark (he was without money throughout the majority of his youth) and left with his friend, the future politician John Hobhouse.[48]

The Grand Tour of Lord Byron comprised of visits through Portugal, Spain, Albania, Greece, and Turkey. Throughout the adventure, Byron and Hobhouse encountered pirates, had erotic encounters with women, and resided in the house of the tyrannical Ali Pasha, ruler of Albania, who formed a strange fondness for Byron, insisting that the boy treat him as a father figure.[49] Throughout his journey, Byron observed the effects that the Napoleonic War had on the individual countries, inspiring him to put pen to paper and compose the written word. The result of this was the beginning of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. When published, the work would bring Byron fame overnight.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage works as the first step in the therapeutic process because it acts as the prototype to the Byronic Hero. The Byronic Hero stands as a therapeutic instrument in that it represents a "literary avatar" in the text. Peter Otto proposes in his book, *Multiplying Worlds*, the concept of virtual reality in fiction. Citing

[48] Eisler, *Byron*. p. 176
[49] Ibid., p. 221

an online source, *Second Life*, Otto explains that in virtual reality, the user creates an avatar through which he lives a fictionalized life inside a virtually created world. How does this work with literature? The idea of virtual reality makes sense in the technological world of today. However, in Byron's time, two hundred years ago, such a concept as virtual reality was not known. The first computers would not be pioneered until after the Poet's death, though they were coincidentally tied with Byron's daughter, Ada Lovelace.[50] Though the term "virtual reality" was not coined until 1986 by Jaron Lanier, Peter Otto points to Jonathan Steuer, who in 1992 proposed a new way of understanding virtual reality, saying that it should be "defined 'as a particular type of experience, rather than as a collection of hardware.'"[51]

Using this alternative view on such a concept, it is possible to propose that Lord Byron re-imagined himself in a form almost akin to what Steuer calls virtual reality, and that this new avatar, in taking on increasingly new and Byronic attributes, became a vessel that the author could use to propel himself forward, leaving that state of melancholy behind, and pushing forward into uncharted territory both through his writings and through his moral character.

Peter Otto quotes Liz Grosz in saying that the virtual reality "of a computer is fundamentally no different from the virtual reality of writing, reading, drawing, or even thinking. The virtual is the space of the emergence of the new."[52] The concept of virtual

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[50] Augusta Ada Byron Lovelace, the daughter of Lord and Lady Byron, was born in 1815. Working alongside Charles Babbage, the creator of the Analytical Engine, Ada wrote an algorithm for the computer. She is considered to be one of the first computer pioneers, known as the "Prophet of the Computer Age." "The Babbage Engine: Ada Lovelace", *computerhistory.org*, (The Computer History Museum, 2008).
[51] Peter Otto, *Multiplying Worlds: Romanticism, Modernity, and the Emergence of Virtual Reality*, (New York: Oxford University Press, 2011). p. 2-13
[52] Ibid.,

reality did exist in the nineteenth century, as evidenced by Otto's book, when he writes of William Blake's "Vision of Judgement," noting that Blake claims "that the virtual world opened by his art is reality."[53]

Using Peter Otto's vision of virtual reality, the connection between his theory and what Byron was working on with his hero-type seem to blend together, adding credence to the belief that the lord poet's writing was a form of creation. Byron created an avatar, a virtual representation of himself on the page, fueled by past experiences that could act as a form of catharsis. The Byronic Hero, in this case, acts as a mask, allowing Byron to flesh out the avatar using pent-up emotion and thoughts that he was otherwise, unable to express.

Author Stephen King used something akin to a literary avatar when writing his early novels. Tormented by the idea that he might hurt his children while under the frequent influence of drugs and alcohol, King began a novel that envisions a alcohol-driven father who nearly kills his own son, *The Shining*. King believed that if he wrote down his fears, they would not occur. The result of this was a slew of award-winning novels that boosted his fame.[54] If Byron felt anything like Stephen King did on the subject of channeling some emotion or action, is not known. However he felt on the subject, Byron created an avatar for his emotions in the virtual reality that was the Byronic Hero character-type. He created a "persona" to be used to his own ends.

Percy Shelley, Byron's contemporary and good friend creates an avatar himself in his poem "Alastor." In his review of Tilottama Rajan's *Romantic Narrative: Shelley,*

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[53] Ibid.,

[54] David Leafe, "Stephen King's Real Horror Story: How the novelist's addiction to drink and drugs nearly killed him," last modified May 12, 2009, www.dailymail.co.uk.

Hays, Godwin, Wollstonecraft, Sean Dempsey writes about Rajan's interest in Shelley's "Alastor" in Rajan's first chapter. Dempsey notes that "the relationship within the poem between the Narrator and the Poet whose life he describes functions as an autonarration, one that enables Shelley to project 'himself as a subject still in process, through a series of part-objects, by way of whom he negotiates his relationship to poetry'."[55] Shelley thus creates an avatar. Dempsey continues, "This negotiation carried out through the Narrator's attempt to use the figure of the Poet, whom we know only from the outside, like the pyramids among which he wanders in search of meaning, as a kind of cypher or analytic blank screen." Using the poem as support, Shelley's avatar is able to accomplish its purpose.

What Byron does with the avatar of Harold, is similar to what Shelley does, as Rajan, in Dempsey's review, claims "the Narrator tries to gain access to himself, to construct himself to himself." Through constructing the avatar, Byron is able to isolate the part of himself that he believes is detrimental to his well-being. He is then potentially able to mold the avatar into whatever he desires. Byron uses the Napoleonic War much in the same way that Shelley uses the pyramids, it functions in a way that allows Byron to add to Harold's character depth, thus adding more of himself to his creation. Shelley accomplishes his goal through what literary critics call enjambment. This is basically a continuation of text without a pause at the end of a line or stanza. "Rajan argues that structural repetitions in narrative, like the encounters with the Arab woman and the veiled maid within 'Alastor' can mimic enjambment's indecisiveness, thereby releasing readers

[55] Sean Dempsey, "Tilottama Rajan. Romantic Narrative: Shelley Hays Godwin Wollstonecraft, *Studies in Romanticism*, (Boston: University of Boston College of Arts and Sciences, 2013), p. 323-327

from the necessity of reading solely for the plot."[56] This is important because it offers "access to a potential space wherein the associations that constitute common sense can be loosened, revised, and reformed."[57] The avatar thus gives Byron and the reader a way of breaking the calcification that was preventing them from mental movement.

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage works in the form of a transitional frame, being the first step in the therapy process. This step calls on the image of frames, similar to that of a moving picture. Byron presents multiple scenes as Harold journeys throughout the poem. This story thus becomes a travel narrative. The reasoning behind such a claim is that Byron began to find healing in his traveling from one place to another, and he paints a picture in his poetry each time he stops. These pictures, these frames are then pieced together on a grand scale, allowing Byron to form a transitional journal through his poetry. His movement allows for the emergence of the ventilation effect, allowing him to break him of his melancholic behavior.

Peter Thorslev notes that throughout the entirety of the first two cantos, the poem has "no less than three different poetic characters."[58] These characters include Childe Harold, the strange, minstrel-narrator from Canto I, and finally Byron himself. This third character, the poet, "breaks in with personal elegies, or with poetic diatribes against war and tyranny." Byron's own personality within the work, however, is "not really consistent in voice or character with the other two persons in the poem." Thorslev states that this does not change until much later. "Byron does not really clear up the confusion

[56] Ibid., p. 324
[57] Ibid.,
[58] Peter Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*. p. 128

until the fourth canto, when he drops the first and second poetic characters, and retains only the third."[59]

"Whilome in Albion's isle there dwelt a youth, / Who ne in Virtue's ways did take delight; / But spent his days in riot most uncouth, / and vexed with mirth the drowsy ear of Night." In the opening description of Childe Harold, the minstrel-narrator is evident. "Ah me! in sooth he was a shameless wight, / Sore given to revel and ungodly glee."[60] This emergence of the first personality shows evidence of Byron's experimentation with different characters, akin to the trying on of new masks, of new personalities. The narrator is quite evident in the first canto, appearing in frequent stanzas. "But whence his name / And lineage long, it suits me not to say; / Suffice it, that perchance they were of fame." When concerning the tone of the first canto, and of its narrator, Caroline Franklin noted that the tone "varies between sardonic mockery and serious concern in its use of Harold for self-dramatisation."[61] Byron, though being quick to introduce his minstrel-narrator, is just as quick to remove him from the work. Thorslev notes that the Minstrell seems to "breathe his last in the closing stanza of this canto."[62] Thorslev is correct in his assumption, as the reader can note, when Byron writes after this "one fytte of Harold's pilgrimage" one may find "some tidings" on a "future page, / If he that rhymeth now may scribble moe."[63]

The reasoning behind the sudden emergence and end of the narrator finds a connection with the idea of *Childe Harold* being a transitional piece. The poet was trying

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[59] Ibid., p. 129
[60] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p. 27
[61] Caroline Franklin, *Byron*, (London: Routledge, Taylor and Francis Group), p. 34
[62] Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*. p. 130
[63] Ibid.,

on different personalities to see which best fit him and his poem. This also ties in with the poem's connection with movement. Andrew Elfenbein writes that *Childe Harold* is a topographical poem. When speaking of Byron's travels across the Mediterranean, Elfenbein notes that "Byron's reflections on these scenes were not secularized versions of classical topoi… but cliches of early nineteenth-century sentimentality."[64] Byron was building something new in his grand poem. The "picturesquely ordered English scenes and classical commonplaces of eighteenth century topographical poetry give way in Byron to exotic scenes and aesthetic sentimentality."

("*6th Lord Byron and His Servant Robert Rushton*", George Sanders 1810)[65]

[64] Andrew Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians*, (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1995), p. 29
[65] George Sanders, *6th Lord Byron and His Servant Robert Rushton*, 1810. Oil on Canvas. This romanticized image of Lord Byron stepping foot upon solid ground with the wind whipping at his hair

Childe Harold's Pilgrimage was a shock in the eyes of nearly all of its initial readers. Sir Walter Scott was "pleasantly surprised by *Childe Harold* I and II, since this was not the kind or quality of poetry which he had come to expect of Byron."[66] Following his early publication of *Hours of Idleness* and Byron's subsequent publishing of *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers*, criticizing the reviewer of *Hours of Idleness*; Scott and others had come to expect little from the poet.[67]

> "...the character of the Childe is not the poem's only interest, or even perhaps its chief interest: *Childe Harold* is also a great poetic travelogue, a moving rhetorical account of scenes and events described with uncommon sensitivity and intensity."[68]

Thorslev's mention of a "*moving rhetorical account*" goes far in promoting the idea that Byron's movement accounted for his new writing style. "Donne enthusiast" H.J.C. Grierson wrote about *Childe Harold*, noting that as "a descriptive poem alone… *Childe Harold* is the greatest of its kind, the noblest panoramic poem in our literature."[69] Although Thorslev is careful to note that his own work deals with hero-types, he acknowledges that "Childe Harold is the first important Byronic Hero, and the prototype of all the rest."[70]

The concept of the value of movement can be seen through James Chandler's book *An Archaeology of Sympathy*. Chandler speaks about the use of movement, tying in

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symbolizes the concept of travel. With travel, comes the freedom of movement, an essential motif of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

[66] Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*. p. 128

[67] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. As a footnote on page 784 notes, Brougham's (Henry P.) unsigned review, *Edinburgh Review* (February 1808). Stung by this review of his first publicly issued collection of poems, Byron retaliated with the satire *English Bards and Scotch Reviewers* (1809). As late as 1823, he alluded to this review when, as the narrator of *Don Juan*, he claimed that he would never have "worn the motley mantle of a poet, / If some one had not told me to forego it" (Canto XV.191-92).

[68] Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*. p. 128

[69] Ibid.,

[70] Ibid.,

such a topic with that of film. He looks first at *It's a Wonderful Life*, noting that protagonist George Bailey wants to travel the world. His obsession with travel complicates his story though, seemingly the reverse of Byron, in that George must settle for a life in one place, but in order to have happiness with his family, he must first conquer his obsession with travel. He must "internalize or sublimate the urge to journey to the far corners of the earth."[71]

Chandler's book begins to tie with Byron's journey when he speaks of Bailey's approach to solving his problem. Bailey "translates his desire for actual travel into a kind of virtual travel, a mobility of spirit." This allows Bailey "to pass sympathetically into the point of view of those he encounters in everyday life."[72] *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* works in this same way. Byron, though traveling across Europe, translated his journey into his poetry. In establishing his virtual avatar, Byron was able to do for his mind, what he had already done for his body. His psyche could now travel as well, leaving the virtual England that it still occupied and transitioning, through the frames of *Childe Harold's* wandering journey.

James Chandler speaks of the modern materialist notion that life should be reduced to a "principle of motion," because in the world of literature, citing Dickens, "the soul itself is defined by a kind of motion or mobility."[73] Chandler links his analysis of travel with the concept of *Sentimental Journey*, a phrase coined by Laurence Sterne in 1768. Chandler wishes to use Sterne to discuss the "tropes and traits" associated with Sterne's idea. He wishes to show that they "derive from a semi-occulted discourse on the

[71] James Chandler, *An Archaeology of Sympathy*, (Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 2012), p. 176-202
[72] Ibid., p. 177
[73] Ibid.,

'sensorium' as the soul's quasi-immaterial earthly casing - its 'vehicle.'" Chandler's idea of a "vehicle," tied in with his of the "notion of the 'vehicular state' as a condition in which the ideas of communication and transportation come almost to converge," link with Byron's usage of the Byronic Hero.[74] Movement becomes essential as a mode of healing.

For the purposes of this thesis, Chandler's book is to be used as a jumping place so as to provide a better understanding of the necessity of *Childe Harold*. Though not the defining piece of this project, the poem is essential to the building of *Manfred*, what the author considers being Byron's final attempt at healing his wounded psyche. Movement thus plays a role in breaking the melancholy that blocks to the path to healing. If one were to study both William Wordsworth and Charles Darwin, two great minds of the nineteenth century, they would find at least one thing in common between these two men. Both Wordsworth and Darwin were prone to long walks, often for miles at a time, and for the express purpose of better thinking. Darwin's "thinking path," a sunken route near his home was not naturally as embedded into the ground as it is today. Darwin dug a path into the earth with the repetition of his pacing. He would ponder for hours on the best way to continue his work. Wordsworth would walk for miles around the countryside of the Lake District, where he lived, for almost this exact purpose. A body in motion in this case acts as a catalyst for the mind. Byron's leaving of his native England began the process, though the envisioning of the avatar of Harold acted to thaw his frozen mind.

Later in his book, James Chandler notes that "the soul, when moved, is moved 'beyond' itself - it is moved elsewhere." Chandler explains that "Whatever transports the

[74] Ibid., 180

soul in such a manner - whether the movement be actual or virtual - becomes a vehicle, which likewise can be actual or virtual."[75] This thus helps to explain the therapeutic purpose of the Byronic Hero. If the reader were to follow the idea that the psyche is thus somehow related to the soul, the poem, and the avatar work together to help to move Byron's "soul." William Butler Yeats helped to explain the way in which the vehicle assists the soul, saying that the "vehicle of the human soul is what used to be called the animal spirits." More importantly he noted that the "soul has a plastic power," and that the vehicle can "mould it to any shape that it will by an act of imagination."[76] Just like the soul, one can argue that through what Wordsworth called "the real language of men," that of poetry, Byron could mould, through his imagination, a new reality, a new version of himself. This process, using the vehicular state, thus needs the power of movement as the catalyst of its design.

("*Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*" Joseph Mallord William Turner, 1823.)[77]

[75] Ibid., p. 194
[76] Ibid.,
[77] Joseph Mallord William Turner, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*. 1823. Oil on Canvas. This painting, bearing the very name of Byron's famous poem, conjures up the beauty of foreign lands. The depiction of ruins in the far background helps to give hint to the power of the unknown.

As the Grand Tour progressed, Hobhouse noted that Byron would grow distant at intervals, secluding himself from the group to work on the project. The poet had been captured with an urge to write out his thoughts. The culmination of his experience with the Napoleonic War and the new cultures of foreign countries had aided his slow transformation. Benita Eisler notes in her biography of the poet that the war had an impact on Byron. "In the process the poet, too, changed. The young aristocrat was 'infinitely amused' by the novelty and excitement of otherness and, most intoxicating of all, by his distance from England."[78] Movement and a distancing from his native land had begun to free Byron from his state. Byron was "delighting in his 'most superb uniform… indispensable in traveling."[79] According to Andrew Elfenbein, in his book *Byron and the Victorians*, "for Byron's contemporaries, the sense that Byron was his heroes struck them with an oddly irresistible force."[80] Sir Walter Scott wrote about *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, writing "you cannot for your soul avoid concluding that the author as he gives an account of his own travels is also doing so in his own character."[81] Carol Franklin notes that the "protagonist, Harold, was the poet's alter ego, a libertine satiated with sin." The narrator treats Harold with "distanced irony and sometimes outright moral condemnation, as he travels across the Iberian Peninsula and through the Ottoman Empire."[82] Franklin goes on to quote Thorslev, noting that Harold "is the earliest version of the 'Byronic hero', who had evolved out of the Gothic villain, with a dash of the child of nature and the gloomy egoist."

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[78] Eisler, *Byron*, p. 189
[79] Ibid.,
[80] Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians*, p. 13
[81] Ibid.,
[82] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 34

As Byron's poem continues, the "narrator's moralistic travelogue becomes increasingly self-referential in *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*."[83] Thorslev mentions this as well, writing that "in the Second Canto… we are left for the most part with Byron's own persona."[84] The poem often references very personal memories from Byron's past. As he transitions from frame to frame, he encounters moments from his path and expresses his feelings in the poetry. "There, thou! – whose love and life together fled, / Have left me here to love and live in vain – / Twin'd with my heart, and can I deem thee dead, / When busy Memory flashes on my brain?"[85] Byron seems to reference John Edleston, a choir boy that Byron fell deeply in love with while studying at Cambridge. Edleston gave Byron a cornelian brooch pin as a token of his love, which Byron wrote of in his poem, *The Cornelian*. Edleston passed away at a young age, seriously depressing the young lord.

Thorslev mentions that during most of the second canto, the character of Harold is used only as a way of tying the story together. The primary movement of the passages occurs in Byron's self-exhibiting declarations. "Jerome McGann comments that by the end of these two cantos the narrator has gradually become as introspective and brooding as Harold." Harold "declines in importance."[86] This adds to the theory of Byron using the poem as a means of moving forward. It is, as James Chandler would say, Byron's vehicle for his conscious. Harold acts as avatar for the purpose of allowing Byron the movement that he has so desperately been searching for. By the third canto, Harold "will fade away

[83] Ibid.,
[84] Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero,* p. 130
[85] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose,* p. 57
[86] Franklin, *Byron,* p. 35

entirely after the Rhine journey."[87] Franklin notes that McGann saw the use of Harold as "ego-projection was a clumsy device and that contrasting Romantic and satiric/sceptical points of view in the poem were not handled with assurance or consistency." However, he also states that "importance of the development of the poem in Cantos III and IV will lie in the fact that Byron's fragmented poetic identity is foregrounded and shown in process."[88] Byron therefore establishes his avatar, disjointed as he is, for the purpose of moving forward.

Following the publication of the first and second cantos of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron returned home to England and almost immediately felt the effects of fame. The poet was an overnight sensation, and *Childe Harold* was his ticket. In undergoing the Grand Tour, Byron was able to begin breaking the calcifying cycle of melancholy-oriented poetry that had plagued him in his stationary state. It is no surprise then that the next transition in his writing career came after his second departure from England.

In the few years between *Childe Harold's* publication in 1812 and the poet's self-exile in 1816, Byron celebrated fame and fortune, as well as despair. During his residence in England, Byron wrote *The Giaour*, *The Bride of Abydos* (1813), *Parisina* and *The Siege of Corinth* (1815). Though he had achieved fame through his writing, Byron was still in massive debt. The young Lord was married to Anne Isabella Byron in 1815, with whom he had one child, a daughter named Ada. The marriage was not to last, however. By the time of their first anniversary, Byron had begun to turn down all cash payments for his writing, as he believed that the sums offered were beneath him. His wife began to

[87] Ibid.,
[88] Ibid.,

believe that he was insane. Finally, in 1816, after the birth of Ada, the Byrons separated. The family separation, combined with increasing rumors of a relationship between Byron and his half-sister Augusta and a growing debt, forced Byron's hand. The poet left England in April, 1816. He would never return from his self-exile to his native land.

Byron expresses his reasoning behind the purpose of poetry in Canto III by noting "to create, and in creating live / A being more intense."[89] At the time of the writing of Canto III, Byron encountered a different Europe as he travelled. Much as Byron was a changed man after the failure of his marriage, Europe had transformed after the end of the Napoleonic wars. Byron's writing, reflects Franklin, "is anything but peaceful– it is an agonised expression of inner turmoil."[90] The travelling style of the poem that was evident in Canto I and II is now replaced by a series of personal thoughts and statements. Byron, though tormented at home, was devastated on the separation that he felt as he was torn from his daughter. He molds these feelings, as he has done with Harold in the past, into the third canto of the poem.

> "Is thy face like thy mother's, my fair child!
> Ada! sole daughter of my house and heart?
> When last I saw thy young blue eyes they smiled,
> And then we parted, – not as now we part,
> But with a hope."[91]

Byron dreads that there is no longer any hope of ever seeing his daughter again. Perhaps he has foreseen his own doom? It is clear that this is Byron himself who now appears in the text. Thorslev notes that both characters appear in this canto, the author and Harold, though both now appear much more mature. Like Byron, Harold has

[89] Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians*, p. 32
[90] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 37
[91] Ibid.,

"returned to society, but unable to resist Beauty and Fame, has again been 'burned…' he is 'himself the most unfit / Of men to herd with Man."[92] Byron's new transition, the next frame of the tale, has taken a darker turn. Lord Byron, who was up to this point famed throughout England and Europe, now faced infamy and rejection. As the Poet writes towards the end of Canto III, if he could but harness the power of all his thoughts and feelings into a word, lightning, then he could tell his tale. As it is, Byron fears that his feelings will never be known, that he will die silent. This was now his greatest fear. Thus Byron began to take the first steps toward his ultimate portrayal of the Byronic Hero, his lightning bolt of personal reflection, *Manfred.*

> "Could I embody and unbosom now
> That which is most within me, -- could I wreak
> My thoughts upon expression, and thus throw
> Soul, heart, mind, passions, feelings, strong or weak,
> All that I would have sought, and all I seek,
> Bear, know, feel, and yet breathe -- into *one* word,
> And that one word were Lightning, I would speak;
> But as it is, I live and die unheard,
> With a most voiceless thought, sheathing it as a sword."[93]

[92] Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, p. 130
[93] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*, p. 223

Chapter Four: *Manfred*

In her book, *Persons and Things,* Barbara Johnson attempts to understand the psychological and ethical implications of using people. She notes that although "using people, transforming others into a means for obtaining an end for oneself, is generally considered the very antithesis of ethical behavior," that on a psychological level, it may prove useful.[94] Johnson references Kant, quoting him as saying "It follows of itself that, in the order of ends, man (and every rational being) is an end-in-himself, i.e., he is never to be used merely as a means for someone (even for God) without at the same time being himself an end." Taking this in mind, Johnson notes that there are many ways in which people are used. Some would use others to a narcissistic end. "The literary elaboration of this narcissistic enslavement takes the form of idealization and thingification."

Lord Byron's use of the Byronic Hero is different, however, from the merely narcissistic form of using people described by Johnson. He creates a virtual character for the purpose, being argued here, of freeing himself from the torment of melancholy. As the previous chapter analyzed the role of a transitional frame with *Childe Harold*, this chapter now looks at the next step in the evolution of Byron's journey. Barbara Johnson notes "Indeed, what if the capacity to become a subject was something that could best be learned from an object?" She speaks about why someone might wish to use a person as an object. If the goal is to learn from the object in question, then Byron's used of his hero-type as an instrument to find a way to free himself suggests that he was learning from the hero how not to be that individual any longer. This would suggest that the Byronic Hero thus becomes what Johnson calls a "transitional object." One may ask how

[94] Barbara Johnson, *Persons and Things*, (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008), p. 94-105

this differs from *Childe Harold*, as the titular character was also a Byronic Hero. However, as the previous chapter explains, *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* worked as a travel poem, thus allowing Byron to gain motion. It worked as a series of frames put together to tell a larger story. This chapter explores *Manfred*, Byron's closet-drama, a play, not a poem.

The transitional object is a term used by D. W. Winnicott, who describes it as "the first 'not me' possessions."[95] He uses it in conjunction with the example of an old blanket and a baby, noting that the transition object is neither "internal" nor "external," but rather something in between. This is the fundamental idea of the Byronic Hero, as presented in this thesis. That is to say, that the hero-type emerges during a transition from melancholy to humor in Lord Byron's writing, as mentioned before. Johnson is careful to note that the transitional object is not "a narcissistic object… It is not an image but a thing." She also states that the most valuable thing about a transitional object is its "lack of perfection, its irrelevance to the question of perfection," that is, its persona.[96] In this reasoning, the Byronic Hero represents a mask that can be worn by the user, Byron in this case, allowing him to take on this new persona.

When describing the Byronic Hero as the object "between" two things, it is essential to note the time frame in which the Byronic Hero is truly prevalent in Byron's work. The hero first truly emerges in 1809 as *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* begins, though this version is merely a prototype, and seemingly disappears after *Manfred*, what this project will call a "true" Byronic Hero, only to reemerge as a new, satirical narrator for *Don Juan*. The "between" in this case is the space of time that occurs in the years 1809

[95] Ibid., p. 96
[96] Ibid.,

through 1817. Something occurred in those eight years that drastically affected Byron's psyche and literary style. The Byronic Hero serves as the answer to this question. The literary avatar that he constructed served as the transitional object, allowing him to navigate the immense gulf that had occurred in his trauma-stricken mind. It is in this regard that the therapy of dark literature emerges. Through the creation of an anti-hero, Byron is able to look directly at himself, self-reflected upon him in a way not unlike Bertolt Brecht's "Epic Theatre," thus allowing Byron to break free of his demons.

Winnicott is careful to note though that transitional object "does not 'go inside' nor does the feeling about it necessarily undergo repression. It is not forgotten and it is not mourned."[97] This accounts for the loss of the Byronic Hero in Byron's writings. As a temporary aid, the reader could imagine the hero-type as a subway train, as well as being a mask. A passenger boards the train at point A, and rides the vehicle to point B, where they then get off and continue on their journey. The Byronic Hero, the train, is not destroyed or forgotten, it is simply not needed anymore. It remains where it is, but the passenger no longer needs to ride it. If this is correct, then it goes to state that one of the greatest character-types of the modern age was birthed for the soul intention of a therapeutic task. Byron did create a persona, an avatar in the virtual world, and he then used that avatar for his own purpose, but since it is a transitional object, it is not a narcissistic one. In this way, he is able to begin a method of transport, which is a characteristic of the train-style, and the mask, as it serves to allow movement without fear of detection. Johnson states that "perhaps a synonym for 'using people' would be, paradoxically, 'trusting people,' creating a space of play and risk that does not depend on

[97] Ibid., p. 100

maintaining intactness and separation."[98] By trusting in the avatar, in the virtual representation of everything that he did not want to be, Byron was able to begin the journey toward something new. Byron's final version of his healing avatar comes in the form of *Manfred*.

The world of Byron's *Manfred* is a chaotic place, fraught with vivid images, turbulent waves, and lonesome cliffs. In the midst of it all there is Manfred, the title character. *Manfred* is a three act play written by Byron in 1816, and is noted by Alice Levine as giving "dramatic form to the personality, psychology, and moral and metaphysical speculations of the Byronic Hero."[99] The play has been called the clearest depiction of Byron's hero-type, and, perhaps, has the strongest ties to the Lord himself. "Here began the movement towards Don Juan, as Byron set his sights not on a future of painful memory but on the redemptive possibilities opened up by the human capacity to forget."[100] Rawes' statement rings true as *Manfred* stands, in this project, as the great moment in which dark therapy comes home for Byron.

The connection between *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Manfred* is found in the third canto of the former poem. As Caroline Franklin marked the change in Byron's tone from Canto II to Canto III, Alan Rawes, writing in the *Cambridge Companion to Byron*, writes "The years 1816–17 saw a major shift in the direction of Byron's poetry. This began in Childe Harold iii, where Byron turned away from the vision of extreme human

[98] Ibid., p. 105
[99] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p. 247
[100] Alan Rawes and Drummond Bone, ed. "1816-17: *Childe Harold III* and *Manfred*," *The Cambridge Companion to Byron*, (Cambridge: University of Cambridge Press), p. 118-132

suffering that had dominated his poetry since 1812." Byron had chosen "to explore other areas of human experience and consciousness."[101]

It is important to note that Byron's therapeutic journey began simply as a way of recovering from a seemingly life-long battle with the throws of melancholy. *Childe Harold* served as the mechanism to begin such a transformation, as it allowed Byron to find movement. Movement directly counteracted the effects of melancholy, as melancholy, through a calcification effect, causes paralysis, the lack of movement. By transitioning quickly from one place to the next, Byron was able to free his mind again, but *Childe Harold,* for all of its good, came with its own problems. Byron was relatively unknown before the publishing of Canto I and II, after which he rose to fame quickly. People began to see the Lord as the figure of Harold, knowing him only by his literary presence and the rumors that circulated about him throughout London. As his marriage began to fail, the image of Byron became one of detestation. Suddenly melancholy, that blockage that stood in his way, became symbolized in the form of his very own readers' impressions of him.

Caroline Franklin writes that "Byron began writing Manfred in the summer of 1816 in Switzerland; the first two acts were probably composed as he was touring the Alps."[102] The summer of 1816 was marked by what literary historians have come to call the "Haunted Summer." Byron settled near Lake Geneva, in the Villa Diodati. He brought with him his young physician, John William Polidori.[103] Nearby Percy Bysshe

[101] Rawes and Bone, ed. "1816-17," p. 118
[102] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 59
[103] John William Polidori would become famous after the events in June, 1816, during which time he penned *The Vampyre*. Polidori is often called the father of the Gothic Vampire. His story encapsulating many of the elements of the creature as it is seen today.

Shelley and his future wife Mary Godwin had rented a home. Byron and Shelley soon befriended each other, and during the harsh weather of June, 1816 the group, including Claire Clairmont, stayed with Byron. Legend has it that they set about writing and telling tales to pass the time. From this three-day event came Mary Shelley's *Frankenstein* and Polidori's *The Vampyre*. During his time on Lake Geneva, Byron also wrote the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*.

(*"John William Polidori"* by F.G. Gainsford)[104]

Concerning *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage,* the last chapter pointed out that Canto III is heavily saturated with personal details concerning Byron's marriage. It also resonates with his feelings towards the destruction of his family. Rawes marks this as well. "In the poem we watch Byron exploring possible futures he himself might move towards." In previously establishing the concept of the creation of the literary avatar, it has been expressed that Byron crafts the Byronic hero as a transitional object, something to use in the hopes of moving forward. Rawes writes "while he is haunted by, or tempted by, the idea of himself as a Byronic hero, he is not one." This is because Byron's "'heart'

[104] F. G. Gainsford, *John William Polidori*. Oil on Canvas.

has ‘perchance . . . lost a string’ …he is not at the final extremity experienced by his tragic heroes.” The truly tragic quality of the Byronic Hero is the way in which almost every example of this character type meets their own untimely end. They are driven to complete madness. Byron’s lack of these qualities is important because it “offers Byron a poetic opportunity: to explore the means of recovery from pain, and movement forward from and beyond it, that are available to him.”[105] This is due to his creation of his avatar. Byron was able to channel the darkest parts of himself into the literary hero. With Manfred, Byron crafted an image of himself as seen by his reader following his exile. This image represented, not what Byron wished to be, but what people saw him as. The opinion of the people had become the blockage that Byron desperately wished to clear away.

Manfred is, as Franklin so precisely points out, “a Byronic hero… similar to a Gothic villain.” Manfred represents the Byronic Hero through several features about his character that are often seen throughout the play. Manfred stands for the image of Byron as seen by his contemporary reader. He is violently moody, lashing out at others. Manfred is also often alone.

> “Manfred: The lamp must be replenish’d, but even then
> It will not burn so long as I must watch;”[106]

The lamp represents Manfred’s heart. His acknowledgement that it will not burn as long Manfred stands watch marks the end of some great love in his life. He no longer feels the passion that he once did. This opening scene also symbolizes the isolation of Manfred. He stands alone in the darkness. A question that begs asking and one that finds its

[105] Ibid., p. 119
[106] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron’s Poetry and Prose*. p. 249

connection with *Childe Harold* concerns why Manfred is alone. What is the reason for his isolation, and, as the reader soon discovers, his need to forget? "My slumbers - if I slumber - are not sleep, / But a continuance of enduring thought." Manfred's mind is constantly harkening back to some mysterious and seemingly tragic event: "Which then I can resist not: in my heart." He is drawn to this memory, the reasoning behind the dousing of his internal flame. "There is a vigil, and these eyes but close / To look within; and yet I live, and bear / The aspect and the form of breathing men." Manfred seems to be living two separate lives. One is in memory, the other reality. "But grief should be the instructor of the wise; / Sorrow is knowledge: they who know the most / Must mourn the deepest o'er the fatal truth, / The Tree of Knowledge is not that of Life."[107] His memories haunt him. They seem to drive him mad with despair.

In the opening scene of *Manfred*, the reader finds Manfred, "a Faustian seeker after knowledge, conjures up seven spirits of earth and air. But he asks them not for more life, wealth or powers, but for forgetfulness."[108] Canto III and Byron's play find connection in their mutual search for forgetfulness. Alan Rawes writes "Byron steps forward at the beginning of the canto, as a pioneer and example, to explore his own capacity for forgetfulness."[109] The concept of forgetfulness is linked to yet another element of *Manfred* that makes it so essential to this project. This is the connection with Byron himself. The Lord found that forgetfulness was a beautiful alternative to the constant, and ever increasing shame brought forth by infamy.

[107] Ibid.,
[108] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 59
[109] Rawes and Bone, ed. "1816-17," p. 119

Manfred has often been called a "closet drama." This is, on one part, due to Byron's own words in the title. He describes it as a "dramatic poem." *Manfred* was not intended for the stage, but rather as a piece of literature to be read. This hearkens to one of the most pivotal arguments presented in the text. It has been proposed by many, including Franklin and Thorslev, that the character of Count Manfred bears remarkable similarities to Byron himself, and that *Manfred* may be an autobiographical work. Byron wrote that "He is one of the best of my misbegotten – say what they will."[110] Manfred is acknowledged by Byron for what he is, an avatar. Perhaps he is something more though? Manfred is the greatest of the Byronic Heroes because he represents all of Byron's anti-hero qualities. Manfred is tormented by an unknown event of his past, and he attacks the world of other men. Manfred is an alien in the world of the other characters because he has not the mind that is needed to mingle with such groups. "The biographical context of Byron's remorse and self-disgust, his preoccupation with the concept of damnation following his incestuous relationship with his half-sister, Augusta, and the breakdown of his marriage, is obvious."[111]

Taking *Manfred* as a closet drama, a play not intended to be performed on the stage, the connection with Byron and Manfred echoes in the great sadness that Manfred laments over. Manfred "nursed a dark secret which, it is hinted, was incest with his twin sister, Astarte. More than that, the deed had led to her death, perhaps by suicide." This is the reason for Manfred's intense moodiness. The mood of Manfred is, in part, one of the driving factors of the Byronic Hero. A character so much at odds with the world around him that he shuns all help offered and instead dives deep into a well of self-loathing and

[110] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 59
[111] Ibid.,

despair. The term mood itself refers to an emotion state. In the play, the reader can see the emotional state of Manfred to be one of high stress. Manfred forever seems to be tormented by some unknown crime. The crime committed links to the loss of Manfred's love, Astarte, whom he is lamenting. Critics often link Astarte to the real life Augusta Leigh, Byron's half-sister. At the time of the drama's publication, Augusta was in a deep scandal with Byron, over the possibility of the two sharing an incestuous relationship. There is a connection then between *Manfred,* and Byron himself, which is expressive through the mood of the character. Whereas Byron was forced to flee from England, he is not able to escape the harsh criticism that follows him after the charges are placed. Peter Thorslev says that "Manfred does have a secret sin, and it involves Lady Astarte, who is of his 'own blood,' and who loved him 'as we should not love.'"[112]

> "I say 't is blood – my blood! the pure warm stream
> Which ran in the veins of my fathers, and in ours
> When we were in our youth, and had one heart,
> And loved each other as we should not love,
> And this was shed: but still it rises up,
> Colouring the clouds, that shut me out from heaven,
> Where thou art not- and I shall never be."[113]

Through his writings, Byron confronts his guilt and his inability to escape it through Manfred. The titular character, is trying hard to get away from his guilt through attempted suicide and the summoning of seven spirits, whom he begs forgetfulness. Through their mutual qualities, one can make the conclusion that Byron used Manfred as a way of coping.

The idea of forgetfulness, that same motif that spread throughout *Childe Harold* Canto III finds its relevance with the autobiographical qualities of *Manfred*. The horror

[112] Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, p. 165
[113] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p. 259

that haunts Manfred comes from the death of Astarte. He did not kill her, "not with my hand, but heart - which broke her heart - / It gazed on mine, and wither'd. I have shed / Blood, but not hers - and yet her blood was shed - / I saw - and could not stand it."[114] It is implied that Astarte has killed herself out of horror and revulsion at seeing that Manfred, her brother, was in love with her. Manfred now wishes to forget, because in forgetting, he believes that he can heal himself of the curse of his past.

Rawes makes clear Byron's infusion of a wish for forgetfulness, saying of both Byron Harold from Canto III, "His quest is not just for a way forward out of the memory of his own personal pain." Though this was an important aspect of his writing at this time, it was also "an attempt to pioneer a way forward out of the memory of the 'triumph and subsequent defeat of the French republic in the sickening revolution of the great wheel of history."[115] Byron begins this journey by first looking at himself. He wants to "distract himself from memory," and he does this through "imaginative creativity" and the sublime." Imaginative creativity is undertaken in the hope that 'earth-born jars, / And human frailties' might be 'forgotten quite.'" The sublime is "contemplated in the hope that 'I live not in myself, but . . . become / Portion of that around me.'"[116] Byron wishes to fashion a new world for himself in the poem so as to transcend the bounds of his environs. Often, when a person is stuck in a situation that seems dire, they will turn to some form of entertainment for escape. This is a therapeutic quality, going along well with the other aspects of this project. Byron's sudden pairing with the sublime harkens back to Chapter Two and "Darkness." For Byron, as stated before, the dynamic balance

[114] Ibid., pg. 264
[115] Rawes and Bone, ed. "1816-17," p. 119
[116] Ibid.,

had been disturbed, shifted. He turns now, in Canto III to a return to the natural elements of the sublime, perhaps in the hope that he can rebalance himself, and thus find peace. Byron's connection with the sublime and *Manfred* will be explored in the course of this chapter.

In the third canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, Byron goes to work early to establish the motif of forgetfulness, but this was not his sole intention. Forgetfulness, in itself, offers only a kind of death and this was not very likely to appeal to a poet who claimed that the 'great object of life is Sensation – to feel that we exist – even though in pain.'" It is strange, then, because what Byron seems to do in that canto is actually what Rawes calls an "energetic denial of the power of death." This theme of denying death carries over into *Manfred*, also to be explored in the near future. Forgetfulness in *Childe Harold* is "sought so that sources of renewed life, of new vitality, which might exist on the other side of forgetting pain, can be discovered and explored."[117]

> 'Tis to create, and in creating live
> A being more intense, that we endow
> With form our fancy, gaining as we give
> The life we image, even as I do now.
> What am I? Nothing; but not so art thou,
> Soul of my thought! with whom I traverse earth,
> Invisible but gazing, as I glow
> Mix'd with thy spirit, blended with thy birth,
> And feeling still with thee in my crush'd feelings' dearth.[118]

This stanza from Canto III foreshadows Byron's purpose of creating Count Manfred. It has been well established now that Manfred is Byron's therapeutic avatar. He is created as the "soul of my thought" for Byron. Manfred represents a side of Byron, that before

[117] Ibid., p. 120
[118] Ibid.,

the publishing of the poem, hardly anyone had ever seen. His wife, the Lady Byron, believed that her husband was insane. She saw the darker part of his fractured psyche, the side that Byron poured into his avatar. Therefore it is easy to assume that *Manfred* could merely represent an extension of Byron's interest in forgetfulness. This would then follow that Manfred is merely Byron and Astarte is Augusta. However, Jerome McGann "suggests that Astarte should be seen not as representing Augusta, but as Manfred's star or epipsyche, for the theme is self-destruction rather than sexual guilt."[119] This thesis supports this statement partially, as the autobiographical elements allow for Byron's therapeutic transformation to occur. Caroline Franklin notes that "the play certainly should be regarded not merely as therapeutic self-expression but, in literary terms, as a bold generic experiment." In saying this, she seems to point toward the fact that *Manfred* is Byron's last great attempt at freeing himself. It is a story about a Satanic-like figure, the Byron of the reader, who wishes to free himself now from the pressure of compressing opinion. Though *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* Canto III and *Manfred* have many of the same qualities they differ in the defying fact that people had come to see Harold as a Byron before they even knew him. They had grown used to the melancholic boy who lamented on the horror of war. After his exile, the character of Manfred came to represent a clear-cut image of Byron as he was portrayed to be in England. The character is pure in his anguish, in his desire to forget the horror of his past. Rawes sees this as well, writing that "in the figure of Manfred, Byron is returning to and reconsidering the Byronic hero in the light of Childe Harold iii."[120] *Manfred* is "the Byronic Hero in the

[119] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 59
[120] Rawes and Bone, ed. "1816-17," p. 125

process of maturing."[121] Thus he is saying that *Manfred* is Byron's acknowledging of his audience's opinion and the manifestation of his desire to exorcise that opinion.

There is one other connection between Canto III of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage* and *Manfred* that is highly important to note. That is that both pieces exhibit traits of travel, though both forms are quite different. For *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, movement existed in a sense that Harold was on a journey across Europe, recording everything that he saw as he went. This is, as Elfenbein noted, a topographical type of poetry, in which Byron relied on transitional frames. This has already been established. *Manfred* uses movement in a different sense. Unlike the writing of *Childe Harold,* the world of *Manfred* is a stationary one. For the majority of the play, Manfred haunts his Gothic abode. The play never leaves the area surrounding the Alps. Movement finds itself interpreted by the very nature of the project itself. It is a play, something that is meant to be watched. When one enters the theater, they take a place in a seat, and their minds are taken on a journey. It is a journey of the imagination, in which the viewer is taken into the world of the play. Andrew Elfenbein writes "the chief characteristic of his [Byron] subjectivity is what he calls 'mobility,' a general skepticism about following any established system of belief."[122] Not only is mobility important for *Manfred*, it, along with the concept of forgetfulness, serve as a jumping point into a deeper analysis of *Manfred*. That is, the psychological aspect of the play, of Manfred himself.

This current chapter has made use of phrases such as closet drama, forgetfulness, mobility, and has proposed an autobiographical quality to the play *Manfred*. Now, it is the intention of the work to take all of these things and, like a series of small,

[121] Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, p. 168
[122] Elfenbein, *Byron and the Victorians*, p. 44

interconnected waterways, follow them to their source. It is now no longer a question of how does Byron use all of these tools, but why he would piece them together in such a text. As the greatest of his plays, *Manfred* not only represents an autobiographical connection with the poet, but it also gives the reader an insight into his mind. Caroline Franklin writes that *Manfred* "dramatizes the struggle within the mind of one man." The play gives the reader access to such information through "the supernatural spirits as representing aspects of that mind."[123]

According to Timothy Morton, in his article "Byron's *Manfred* and Ecocriticism," writes that "*Manfred* appears to be the ultimate Romantic psychodrama. 'Scene: a Gothic gallery. Time: midnight' is the opening stage direction."[124] Franklin also mentions the opening location. "The play opens melodramatically in a Gothic gallery at midnight, and the Magus figure, Manfred, a Faustian seeker after knowledge, conjures up seven spirits of earth and air." "Mysterious Agency! / Ye spirits of the unbounded Universe, / Whom I have sought in darkness and in light!" Byron's calling of the spirits is representative of Faust calling upon the spirit of Mephistopheles in both *Dr. Faustus* and Goethe's *Faust*. "Ye, who do compass earth about, and dwell / In subtler essence!" In invoking a call to the spirits of the earth, Manfred is essentially calling to the romantic spirit of the land. This is very Wordsworthian and echoes poems such as *The Prelude*, "Tintern Abbey," and "Nutting." "Ye, to whom the tops / Of mountains inaccessible are haunts, / And earth's and ocean's caves familiar things- / I call upon ye by the written charm / Which gives me power upon you – Rise! appear!" Manfred invokes the spirits three times, after

[123] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 59
[124] Timothy Morton, "Byron's *Manfred* and Ecocriticism," *Palgrave Advances in Byron Studies*, (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2007), p. 155-170

which they appear. Both the number three, being the number of times that the spirits refused Manfred, and seven, being the number of spirits, are equally powerful and historic numbers. "What wouldst thou with us, son of mortals - say?" Manfred replies simply with "forgetfulness."[125] However, the spirits only have the power to offer him "Kingdom and sway, and strength, and length of days."

Throughout the text, the relationship between Manfred and the spirits adds to the idea that all of it may just be a manifestation of Manfred's mind. That the spirits cannot grant him his request because they are nothing more than a part of his psyche, and as such, they cannot give him what he wants. The spirits could also represent the reading public. They cannot grant Manfred forgetfulness, because they themselves cannot forget the image of the Poet as they have come to see him. The question then, is whether what Manfred sees is real or just a part of his mind trying to rationalize and come to terms with a deep loss? This is further defended as Manfred asks the spirits to then leave, but instead they ask "is there no other gift/ Which we can make not worthless in thine eyes?" Manfred answers thus, "I have no choice, there is no form on earth / Hideous or beautiful to me. Let him, / Who is most powerful of ye, take such aspect / As unto him may seem most fitting.- Come!" The result of this is the seventh spirit "appearing in the shape of a beautiful female figure," as Byron's stage direction tell. "Oh God! if it be thus, and thou / Art not a madness and a mockery / I yet might be most happy – I will clasp thee, / And we again will be –" As he reaches for the figure, it seems to vanish.

Many would assume that this figure be the shape of Astarte, and though that may well be the case, it stands for the mental projection of Byron's past. Taking that the play

[125] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p. 259

may be autobiographical, one could assume that the image represents Augusta Leigh. However, since this project agrees in part with Jerome McGann's asking of the reader not to look at Astarte as Augusta, then this figure truly would represent Byron's past. Seeking to find solace in his past as a younger man, Byron failed to find that peace due to his ever-present melancholic blockage state. In *Manfred*, it would seem that Byron, through his avatar Manfred, attempts to forgo the new blockage, that caused by the public image, by seeking forgetfulness. Through this, he seeks rejection and destruction of his shattered psyche. However, as Manfred learns, one cannot simply forget the past, as it makes him who he is. Therefore, Manfred calls upon a manifestation of his past, in the form of Astarte's spirit so that he can instead, perhaps, face his demon.

Manfred, having failed to clasp to the image of Astarte, leaves, appearing on the side of a mountain in the next scene. A voice is heard after his departure, and from it issues forth a dark curse on Manfred, saying "that his tormented mind will be his own hell."[126]

(*"Manfred et Astarte (2e Planche) from R. Schumann"* by Henri Fantin-Latour, 1881)[127]

[126] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 59
[127] Henri Fantin-Latour, *Manfred et Astarte (2e Planche) from R. Schumann*. 1881. Lithograph.

A logical question to ask now would be why Byron chooses to shape his trouble of letting go of the past in the form of spirits. It is answered in two ways. The first being that as the Byronic Hero in *Manfred* serves as a transitional object, like the image of the subway or the mask that were both presented previously. Byron must ride the "subway train" on its designated course. That is to say, that the world of *Manfred* acts as the tracks that propel the train in a given direction. For the transitional object to fulfill its intended purpose, the "tracks" that it rides must not be severed, or else it cannot reach its intended destination. In order for Byron to discover if the Byronic Hero can truly transcend the bounds of his broken psyche, he must stay within the world of the object. As that object is represented in the avatar of Manfred, Byron cannot leave Manfred's world. This hearkens to the second answer, by way of Charles Taylor's *A Secular Age*, and the concept of a picture frame, tying in with the image of the mask.[128]

"A picture held us captive." Charles Taylor quotes Ludwig Wittgenstein within his book, *A Secular Age*. As was proposed earlier, the concept of the Byronic Hero as a literary instrument of therapeutic value comes from its use in saturating its readers with an excess of disenchantment and emotion that can be somewhat subliminal. The natural world is so vast, that man cannot help but to be humbled by it. When one stands on the edge of a mountain and commits his gaze to the vastness of the land, he is imbibed by an intense wave of emotion as he realizes that he is dwarfed by the world around him. Caspar David Friedrich's *Wanderer above the Sea of Fog* provides a visual interpretation of Wordsworth's sublime experience. John Lewis Gaddis, a noted historian commented on the painting, saying that it leaves an impression "suggesting at once mastery over a

[128] Charles Taylor, *A Secular Age*, (Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press, 2007), p. 539-556

landscape and the insignificance of the individual within it. We see no face, so it's impossible to know whether the prospect facing the young man is exhilarating, or terrifying, or both."[129]

(*"Wanderer above the Sea of Fog"* by Caspar David Friedrich 1818)[130]

Friedrich's painting and Wordsworth's concept of the sublime work within the context of Wittgenstein's quote. If a picture truly holds us captive, and in Friedrich's painting the reader is exposed to the world of the sublime through visual stimulus, then how does the author invoke such a state? In conjunction with this thesis, Manfred's story is a mental painting, an image, and just like a painting, the image cannot extend past its

[129] "The Art of Caspar David Friedrich," "thomasbouwmeester.com." October 23, 2012. Accessed February 20, 2015

[130] David Caspar Friedrich, *Wanderer above a Sea of Fog*. 1818. Painting

frame. This is akin to the idea of a mask, showing use of the transitional object within the text. The mask has borders, and in order for it to work as it is intended, the wearer must keep their face within those borders. Speaking of *Manfred* and the frame, the obvious argument of course is that the frame is fitted for the painting. Consider for a moment, however, that the picture cannot extend past the confines of its frame. The restriction is the form of the work itself. In this case, *Manfred* represents the frame, and the story of the Count stands as the image inside the frame. To describe a character, Byron must put words to paper; he must "paint" with vocabulary. This breeds conflict. It is almost impossible to describe the atmosphere of a character within a novel without taking one particular opinion of that character being described.

Although it can be thought that Manfred represents the reader's view of Byron, the poet wants the reader to draw their own conclusions on the nature of his character. He wishes to give a description of Manfred without compromising the mysterious atmosphere that constantly envelopes him. For this to happen, Byron employs the power of nature. This concept of a frame and image ties in with Peter Otto as well. Otto, who proposed the concept of the virtual avatar discussed in Chapter Two, states that "that 'virtual reality … is a constant phenomenon in art history that can be traced back to antiquity' and has merely been 'revived and expanded' in the digital age." He goes on to write that "Wall paintings from the late Roman Republic, for example, 'use motifs that address the observer from all sides in a unity of time and place, enclosing him or her hermetically." This is highly important because it "creates an illusion of being in the

picture, inside an image space and its illusionary events."[131] Byron seems to use this frame and image style as a way of staying on the path of the transitional object.

Sergio Leone's famed Western, *The Good, The Bad, and The Ugly*, features a distinct opening scene, set against the backdrop of a deserted Old West town. Outlaws slowly come into view, merging in the center of the street as they begin a daring, and ultimately futile, mission. The opening shot of the first bounty-hunter's face is worthy of note. In this shot, though a word is never spoken, the audience is given a detailed insight into the mood of the character. He is grizzled, unshaven, and dirty. His eyes are cold, the eyes of a killer. The level of description prevalent in this scene alone provides the entire backdrop necessary for the character's later appearance in the film. Byron cannot show us this visual snapshot. He must remain within the confines of his frame. The weather functions to fulfill this purpose. Therefore, the weather becomes an extension of the character himself, adding also as yet another example of how *Manfred* is a psychological text.

The weather plays its biggest part in *Manfred* in the second scene of Act I. Having fled to the edge of a cliff after the events with the seven spirits and the form of Astarte, Manfred contemplates suicide. This scene ties back to Timothy Morton and his calling *Manfred* "the ultimate Romantic Psychodrama." Morton says that the setting of the play helps its readers to see clear resemblances between Manfred's moody personality and the landscape, adding to the belief that all that he sees is nothing more than an illusion in his mind. Morton relates the setting of *Manfred* to the frame of mind of the character and states that "it appears that even if Manfred himself is celebrating his separate ego, he has

[131] Otto, *Multiplying Worlds*, p. 5

to rely on the world around him for help."[132] Morton also talks about the concept of the lack of evidence as to where the other characters come from. Manfred is the only constant character, and it is because of this that Morton says the reader is posed with a dilemma. Either the characters are all *inside* of Manfred's mind, or they are strictly *outside*, and that he is nothing more than an outside force looking in. Morton connects the idea of Manfred being outside or inside through the concept of "solipsism." The defined form of solipsism is the philosophical idea that only one's own mind is sure to exist, and that anything outside of one's mind is unsure.

It would seem to Manfred that only death can bring him peace from the torment that his soul has endeavored. As it turns out, even death cannot come to Manfred, because of an incantation placed upon him that prevents him from dying. This incantation can be seen simply as a way of Manfred justifying that death is not the answer, that killing himself is not the answer, and so he imagines that he cannot die. When he does try to kill himself shortly after, he is "saved" at the final moment by the Chambois Hunter. In that scene, one can see a final example of the possibility of Manfred's environment being a part of his mind, as well as a connection between his mood and that of the landscape itself. As Manfred contemplates suicide, his mind is in eternal conflict and because of this, the environment itself changes rapidly. The Chambois Hunter comes upon him in the high mountain pass on the edge of a cliff. Manfred is deep in the midst of a soliloquy, asking whether it is better to be "grey-haired with anguish, like these blasted pines." As he speaks, the hunter notices that a thick mist is rising quickly from the valley. Manfred's heightened sense of grief comes at the same time, giving way to the thought that his own

[132] Morton, "Byron's *Manfred* and Ecocriticism," p. 156

mood is drawing out on the land, and vice-versa. The hunter approaches him, calling out to him to come back down, to save himself before he is lost in the fog, which can be seen as a plea by Manfred's own subconscious to come back from the edge of madness, lest he be lost forever and driven to death. As the hunter grabs him from crossing the edge of the cliff to his death, Manfred rejects his help, "I am most sick at heart -- nay, grasp me not."[133] The Chambois Hunter grabs him anyway, saving him from apparent death. Byron's usage of the hunter serves as a way of adding to the idea that Manfred cannot die, because death would disrupt the flow of the transitional object. In order for the therapeutic process to be complete, Byron must ride the train to its final stop. The transition object is, as Johnson noted, neither internal nor external, but something in between. Therefore, it is tied with the avatar that is using it, and through the avatar, with Byron. If the avatar dies, the connection is severed, thus breaking the transition that Byron needed.

[133] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p. 258

(*"Manfred und der Gemsjäger"* by Gustave Doré 1853)[134]

As every train eventually comes to a stop, so must Byron's transitional journey through *Manfred*. In Act Two of the *Manfred*, the titular character summons the Witch of the Alps. Franklin notes that "she represents the spirit of Nature itself, and Manfred tells his story to her."[135]

> "Beautiful Spirit! with thy hair of light,
> And dazzling eyes of glory, in whose form
> The charms of Earth's least mortal daughters grow
> To an unearthly stature, in an essence
> Of purer elements; while the hues of youth
> (Carnation'd like a sleeping infant's cheek
> Rock'd by the beating of her mother's heart,
> Or the rose tints, which summer's twilight leaves
> Upon the lofty glacier's virgin snow,
> The blush of earth embracing with her heaven)
> Tinge thy celestial aspect, and make tame
> The beauties of the sunbow which bends o'er thee.

[134] Gustave Doré, *Manfred und der Gemsjäger*, Holzstich. 1853. Oil on Canvas. The Chambois Hunter represents Byron's resistance to death. Manfred cannot kill himself, because it would disrupt the transitional state of the text as it applied to Byron's psyche.
[135] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 60

Beautiful Spirit! in thy calm clear brow,
Wherein is glass'd serenity of soul,
Which of itself shows immortality,
I read that thou wilt pardon to a Son
Of Earth, whom the abstruser powers permit
At times to commune with them- if that he
Avail him of his spells- to call thee thus,
And gaze on thee a moment.[136]

When summoned, the Witch asks Manfred for what does he seek her out. Manfred proceeds to tell of how he caused the death of Astarte, and the Witch agrees to help him with his cause. However, Manfred rejects her help when she asks "if thou / Wilt swear obedience to my will, and do / My bidding, it may help thee to thy wishes." Manfred refuses. In this refusal, there is an echo back to Andrew Elfenbein's quote on the purpose of mobility as "a general skepticism about following any established system of belief." It is in this rejection, which ties back to mobility, that the reader will see the final act of Byron's therapeutic transformation. That is, his escape from the clutches of his audience's opinion.

(*"Manfred and the Witch of the Alps"* by John Martin 1837)[137]

[136] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p 261-262

[137] John Martin, *Manfred and the Witch of the Alps*. 1837. Oil on Canvas. Manfred, in this painting, summons the Witch of the Alps, who represents one of the most important aspects of the play, the rejection aspect.

It can be argued that Byron comes to terms with his audience's view in Act Three, Scene One of *Manfred*. Previously, in the third scene of Act Two, Manfred, having shunned the Witch of the Alps, appears before the three Destinies on the summit of the Jungfrau. Franklin writes that "They remind us of the weird sisters in Macbeth. Their songs show them to be more powerful spirits of nature than the seven elemental spirits of the opening scene." She goes on to note that "though they are also aspects of Nature, they are destructive forces of negation and have been at work spreading storms, plague and destroying political freedom in human society."[138] The Destinies, along with Nemesis, take Manfred to the Hall of Arimanes, who sits on a globe of fire. "The name 'Arimanes' derives from Ahriman, the evil principle in the dualistic ancient Persian religion of Zoroastrianism. He is a more powerful version of Satan." Franklin helps to highlight the motif of rejection in *Manfred,* by stating that "Manfred's quest has brought him to some form of Hades, but he will show that he has free will."[139] All kneel to the "Prince of Earth and Air," but as Manfred enters the room, he causes a stir. The Third Spirit orders Manfred by saying "Bow down and worship, slave - / What, know'st thou not / Thine and our Sovereign? - Tremble, and obey!"[140] Manfred, in true form, defies them. "I know it; / And yet ye see I kneel not." The spirits follow by threatening that they will teach him to kneel, but Manfred continues in his bold defiance. "Tis taught already… I have known / The fulness of humiliation, for / I sunk before my vain despair, and knelt / To my own desolation." The spirits call for his death, but he is protected.

[138] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 60
[139] Ibid., p. 61
[140] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p. 269

When asked what Manfred desires, he says “Call up the dead - my question is for them.” The dead may be seen as representing the spirit of the people, Byron’s readers, in this case. Nemesis calls forth the spirit of Astarte, the symbol of Byron’s past. Franklin mentions that “He [Manfred] has gained a power unique amongst the spirits... Because of this, Arimanes grants his wish to raise the phantom of Astarte from the dead.” When she appears, she refuses to speak to Manfred. Byron can never go back to his past, for it serves only as a way of molding him into the man that he has become. The same can be said of his reader, they do not hear the cries of his true self, only seeing the image that is represented in the text and in the media. Manfred begs, as Byron pleads his audience to listen, for Astarte to speak. Finally, she does, saying “Manfred! To-morrow ends thine earthly ills.” This is a prophetic vision of his death, and it is Byron’s way of setting up the end of his journey with Manfred. Manfred refuses to listen, and he pleads with Astarte to tell him if he is “forgiven.” Franklin writes that “the phantom then disappears, not to be recalled, and this seems to mean that their bond is broken and that she will remain with the powers of good and Manfred will be released to die.” Byron has, as is evident in the beginning of Act Three, found some sort of peace in Astarte’s vanishing. Through her act of ignoring his pleas and leaving, Byron is able to form, to materialize the image of his readers’ rejection of him as the hero. He shows that he is aware of how the world feels about him, and in this, he finds some form of peace. “There is a calm upon me— / Inexplicable stillness! which till now / Did not belong to what I knew of life.”

Acknowledgement is not quite enough. In an effort to finally rid himself of the blockage that stands in the way of healing his psyche, Byron returns to the image of rejection, thus forming what the reader can come to know as the ultimate Byronic Hero.

Though the rebellious figure, before famed for being a rebel without a cause, now finds one as Byron drives at banishing not only the false image of himself, but also a final severing of his past. Peter Thorslev writes that, concerning the nature of the Rebellious Hero, "for both Shelley and Byron, Satan and Prometheus had come to stand for the ultimate in titanic rebellion." That is, it was a "rebellion which asserted the independence of the individual and the primacy of his values not only in the face of society, but even in the face of 'God.'"[141] Rejection becomes the final key in the therapeutic process. Byron cannot be truly free while he remains subservient to anyone. By cutting away all of the people and places that tie him down, he is able to finally rid himself of the blockage. Like a drowning man in water, held down by the ball and chain that slowly drags him to the depths, Byron must now sever that chain, so he may float to the surface. This is accomplished through what Alan Rawes mentioned as the "energetic denial of the power of death." Manfred has refused to serve any of the great powers that he has come upon. This is seen one final time in the end of the play, when the Abbot of St. Maurice tries to save Manfred's soul. Manfred "respects the priest but he has never accommodated his mind to the judgement of others, even to gain sway in order to benefit humankind with his great gifts."[142]

As the end comes for Manfred, demons have arrived, presumably to take him to hell, and the Abbot pleads for the Count to bend his knee to God. The demons speak to Manfred, "come! 'tis time," but Manfred defies them one last time. One demonic spirit says plainly "but thy many crimes / Have made thee -" However, Manfred refuses, stating "what are they to such as thee? / Must crimes be punished but by other crimes, / And

[141] Thorslev, *The Byronic Hero*, p. 172
[142] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 61

greater criminals?—Back to thy hell!" In his last great speech, Manfred's language changes. He is no longer just the rebellious anti-hero. The Byronic Hero fully matures, and Manfred's address to the spirit arcs out at the reader, as Byron addresses them. "Thou hast no power upon me, *that* I feel; / Thou never shalt possess me, *that* I know." The reader's image of Byron is false, and it is here, as his avatar meets its end, that Byron emerges, like a phoenix from the ashes, as the man that he wishes to be. This image of beginning again ties in with the emergence of comedy, as comedy is essentially a type of rebirth. With Manfred's death, with that denial of being a servant of life itself, Byron shows that he will no longer be ruled by the past, the public will no longer hold a power over him. "What I have done is done; I bear within / A torture which could nothing gain from thine… *Thou* didst not tempt me, and thou couldst not tempt me; / I have not been thy dupe, nor am thy prey— / But was my own destroyer, and will be / My own hereafter." The demons disappear, as Byron is done addressing his readers. The Abbot makes one final pleading cry for Manfred in that moment. "Give thy prayers to Heaven / Pray—albeit but in thought,—but die not thus… Cold—cold—even to the heart— / But yet one prayer—Alas! how fares it with thee?" Manfred answers with his most powerful line, and in doing so, Byron detaches himself from the Byronic Hero. He is able, in that moment, to step off the train, to leave the transitional world behind. This also marks the end of what this project has described as a linear path. From *Hours of Idleness*, through *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and into *Manfred*, Byron has transitioned on a straight line, moving forward so as break through the barrier, that blockage in his psyche. Like a dammed river, as he breaks free, Byron leaves the linear path behind and begins to flow, his psyche unobstructed. Manfred's last words haunt the entirety of the play. "Old man!

'tis not so difficult to die."[143] Rawes writes that these last words "suggest a final acquiescence in his own being, a 'repose' in the flow of his existence... and an openness to whatever his being presents him with – even, paradoxically, death."[144] Byron was finally free.

(*"Manfred's Hour of Death"* by Johann Peter Krafft 1825)[145]

[143] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p. 280
[144] Rawes and Bone, ed. "1816-17," p. 128
[145] Johann Peter Krafft, *Manfred's Hour of Death*. 1825. Oil on Canvas. In the denial of even death, Byron uses Count Manfred to enact the final freeing of his mind from the trauma induced state that it had resided in. The literary avatar had helped to complete the therapeutic process.

Conclusion: The Man, No Longer the Myth

On the back of Byron's manuscript for the first canto of *Don Juan*, he had penned a small fragment. Its words ring of the freedom that Byron had found at the end of *Manfred*.

> "I would to heaven that I were so much clay,
> As I am blood, bone, marrow, passion, feeling -
> Because at least the past were pass'd away-
> And for the future - (but I write this reeling,
> Having got drunk exceedingly today,
> So that I seem to stand upon the ceiling)
> I say - the future is a serious matter -
> And so - for God's sake - hock and soda-water!"[146]

Throughout this stanza, Byron alludes to his new-found freedom. "Because at least the past were pass'd away…" He no longer is bound by, as William Blake put it, the "mind-forged manacles" of his past, pulling him down. Byron now looks to the future, though he now approaches it with a much more comedic vane. The importance of comedy, as a form of laughter, is in itself therapeutic. Comedy presents a much more fluid way of working through a problem. For example, in satire, a situation may be dealt with by examining it in a new, and often outlandish light. Therefore, by mocking the very thing that trouble one the most, that person will then have a new sense of authority over their previous situation. Byron is able to find a new way of expressing himself, far away from the stagnant, rigid form of melancholy.

Don Juan functions as a satire, a mock-epic work. From its opening line, "I want a hero: an uncommon want," Byron teases with the past of *Manfred*, in which his dark hero-type was ever-present. Now, as the Byronic Hero is no longer needed, Byron joking chides with his readers. He killed his hero, the version of himself that his audience had

[146] Gordon and Levine, ed. *Byron's Poetry and Prose*. p. 380

believed to be real, and in the aftermath, he asks them to note that "every year and month sends forth a new one." Upon the completion of the first two stanzas, the text was released with Byron's name on it. This was because "they feared the poem might be prosecuted for obscenity, blasphemy and defamation, that it would reignite the separation scandal and that it would complete the ruin of Byron's reputation." The result was not much better than they had planned for. "The first two cantos met with almost universal moral outrage and critical condemnation of its supposed nihilism. Byron had to struggle to continue with the poem and have the second installment published by the reluctant Murray on 8 August 1821."[147] One of the most interesting things about *Don Juan* is the way that it, in its satirical form, mocks Byron's previous works. Andrew Elfenbein writes that "*Don Juan* relentlessly pokes fun at the Byronic style that exhausted itself in *Manfred*… Byron mocks his audience's desire to see his poetry as an embodiment of his life."[148]

> "Here I might enter on a chaste description,
> Having withstood temptation in my youth,
> But hear that several people take exception
> At the first two books having too much truth;
> Therefore I 'll make Don Juan leave the ship soon,
> Because the publisher declares, in sooth,
> Through needles' eyes it easier for the camel is
> To pass, than those two cantos into families."[149]

Byron had to fight hard throughout *Manfred* to show his reader that there was a difference between the character on the page, and the man who had penned him. Though some took the text as the final example of how Byron could "never be a respectable

[147] Franklin, *Byron*, p. 62
[148] Elfenbein, *Byron and Victorians*, p. 40
[149] Ibid.,

author,"[150] he had in fact taken a step forward, moving into writing one of the longest poems in the history of English literature.

Don Juan marks the beginning of Byron's final years. During the writing of *Manfred* and the first cantos of *Don Juan*, Byron moved throughout Italy. He wrote the final canto of *Childe Harold's Pilgrimage*, and fell in love with the Countess Teresa Guiccioli, whom he married. He lived with her in Ravenna from 1819 to 1821, and during those years, Byron was visited frequently by Thomas Moore, the poet, whom Byron entrusted with his personal memoirs. A month after Lord Byron's death, the memoirs were burned, so as to avoid the public scandal from the contents within. Percy Shelley, who also visited, wrote of Byron during that time.

> Lord Byron gets up at two. I get up, quite contrary to my usual custom … at 12. After breakfast we sit talking till six. From six to eight we gallop through the pine forest which divide Ravenna from the sea; we then come home and dine, and sit up gossiping till six in the morning. I don't suppose this will kill me in a week or fortnight, but I shall not try it longer. Lord B.'s establishment consists, besides servants, of ten horses, eight enormous dogs, three monkeys, five cats, an eagle, a crow, and a falcon; and all these, except the horses, walk about the house, which every now and then resounds with their unarbitrated quarrels, as if they were the masters of it… . [P.S.] I find that my enumeration of the animals in this Circean Palace was defective … . I have just met on the grand staircase five peacocks, two guinea hens, and an Egyptian crane. I wonder who all these animals were before they were changed into these shapes.[151]

Shelley and Byron grew very close, the two starting their own newspaper, *The Liberal*, together. During that time, Byron finished the writing of cantos six through twelve of *Don Juan*, and Shelley and he built and sailed on boats together. However, as it had time and time again, tragedy struck Lord Byron on July 8, 1822, when Percy Shelley drowned at sea. Byron had lost a close friend, and England had lost one of the Big Six, the name

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[150] Ibid., 46

[151] Percy Shelley, *Letters: Shelley in Italy*, (Clarendon Press 1964), p. 330.

for Blake, Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, and John Keats, who had died the previous year of consumption.

(*"The Funeral of Shelley"* by Louis Edouard Fournier 1889)[152]

In 1823, after growing bored of life in Italy, Byron pledged his support to the Greek Independence Movement. The Greeks were attempting to become separate from the Ottoman Empire. In July, he had sailed into the Ionian Isles once again, having been there previously on his Grand Tour. After arriving, Byron became instrumental in the refitting of the Greek naval fleet, spending large amounts of his own money in their aid. This new Byron, no longer concerned with selfish notions of the past, had come to see the Greeks as a people that needed his help.

[152] Louis Edouard Fournier, *The Funeral of Shelley*. 1889. Shelley's death cemented Byron as the last living member of the Second Generation Romantic poets. Byron would die two years later.

(*"The Reception of Lord Byron at Missolonghi"* by Theodoros P. Vryzakis 1861)[153]

In 1824, while trying to find a way to rid Lepano, a Greek fortress, of its Turkish defenders, Byron, who had been attempting to command men in the field, fell ill. He was given treatments of blood-letting, though these only aided in his continuing weakness. After two months of recovery, Byron caught a cold, and on April 19, Lord Byron died. He was thirty-six years old, the same age as his father upon his death. Ironically, Byron's daughter, Ada, also passed away at the age of thirty-six.

Upon his death, the reactions were mixed. Greece came to see him as a hero, carving statues of him in god-like pose. Meanwhile, in his native England, his publisher, John Murray, along with Thomas Moore, burned Byron's memoirs, and he was refused a

[153] Theodoros P. Vryzakis, *The Reception of Lord Byron at Missolonghi*. 1861. Oil on Canvas. Byron's final days were spent in Missolonghi, where he died of sickness while fighting for the independence of Greece.

place of commemoration and burial in Westminster Abbey. Against his protests in life, Byron was brought back to England by his half-sister and friends. He was brought near his home in Nottingham, and was buried in the church of St. Mary Magdalene. one hundred and forty-five years after his death, Lord Byron was finally commemorated with a plaque in Westminster Abbey. England had come to see that they had been wrong in shunning the memory of Byron.

When Carlyle said "close your Byron, open your Goethe,"[154] he was crying out for end of the age of Romanticism. Byron was dead, and England was ready for a new image. They were ready to move forward, to see what lay down the winding river of time. However, as much as some wanted Byron to fade away after his death, the survival of his work and his regained popularity stand as a defiant statement on the importance of Romanticism, and on the power of literature. Even in death, Byron still had managed to master his reader, because death is not really the end. As David Mitchell wrote "I believe death is only a door. One closes, and another opens."[155]

[154] Richard A. Cardwell ed., *The Reception of Byron*, (New York: Continuum Press, 2004), p. 432
[155] David Mitchell, *Cloud Atlas*, (New York: Random House, 2004).

(*"Lord Byron on his Deathbed"* by Joseph Denis Odevaere 1826)[156]

[156] Joseph Denis Odevaere, *Lord Byron on his Deathbed*. 1826. Oil on Canvas. Crowned with a wreath of Olive Branches, Byron is represented here as the great king of poets. He was loved dearly by the people of Greece.

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